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Aspects of Magic in La Guajira
[Aspectos de la Magía en la Guajira]

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[1]

Introduction

131 La Guajira Peninsula is situated between 12°-28'-30" and 10°-56' north latitude and 1°-11' and 3° east longitude, taking as a base the meridian of Bogotá. It occupies the northeastern part of Colombia and the most northernmost part of the South American continent. Its boundaries can be defined as follows: on the north and west the Caribbean Sea, on the east Lake Maracaibo, and on the south the department of Magdalena and the neighboring republic of Venezuela. In other words, the Caribbean Sea, Lake Maracaibo, the Río Hacha, and the arroyo Paraguaichón serve as natural boundaries. Part of this peninsula belongs to the republic of Colombia and part, the smaller area, to Venezuela.

133 Its general geological formation appears to be due to the elevation of marine strata, since fossils of sea fauna are found in the subsoil. Its soil is composed of clay, sand, and calcareous strata on the plains, the higher parts belonging to a more ancient formation composed of volcanic rocks, crystalline slate, granite, 135 marble, and jasper, covered by layers of limestone. The predominating minerals are: gypsum, carbonate of lime, argonite, mica, iron ores, and some outcroppings of lignite which have not been exploited up to the present time.

133 La Guajira proper, as a natural geographical region, starts in the west with the last spurs of the Montes de Oca, a continuation of the Cordillera Oriental in Colombia which crosses the Sierra de Perijá and Serrania de los Motilones, mountains whose beneficial influence is felt in the zones of Carraipía and Paraguaichón. But the characteristic relief starts in the southwestern neck and is composed of isolated ridges of mountains whose general orientation is northwest-southeast, running from west to east and known by the names of Cojoro, Jarara, and Macuira. The last has the [2] highest altitude in La Guajira, 857 meters above sea level, according to Ernst (1), and runs out between Jiguaipolu and Parajimarú on the eastern coast of the peninsula.

[113]

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1. Cited by Pichón in Geografía de la Península Guajira [Geography of La Guajira Peninsula].

[2 cont.]

133 The greater part of the coast of La Guajira, which measures in all some 350 kilometers, belongs to Colombia. It starts from the Río Hacha in the west and extends to Lake Maracaibo in the east. It may be divided into two general parts, one low and liable to flooding, the other highland rising sheer from the coast. The low part starts from Pajaina Channel, which flows into Lake Maracaibo in front of San Carlos Island and continues approximately to the port of Cojoro. From there onward the land rises from the sea in the form of cliffs roughly to the level of Castilletes, a point where the coast level descends slightly to rise again near Punta Espada due to the eastern spurs from the Sierra de Macuira, which, as we have noted in previous paragraphs, then lose themselves in the sea. From this point, going always toward the west, the coast is rocky and inaccessible because of its continental structure.

In the far western part of the La Guajira coast we find the
[135 317] most important saltworks that are being exploited in the country, such as those of Pájaro, Manaure, and Bahía Honda which supply salt to the major part of the coastal departments and even to those in the interior of the republic. The coast of this part has numerous beautiful and deep bays among which Bahía Honda is out-
[136] standing. Along the coast rich fishing grounds are found, such as Bahía Honda, Cabo de la Vela, Cardón, and Carrizal, centers of fishing and pearl exploitation. Unfortunately, it has not been
[312] found practicable to make use of all the commercial navigation and fishing possibilities of this coast due to the absence of potable water in the vicinity. This we were well able to appreciate when we found that the water required for drinking in Carrizal and San José de Bahía Honda, during our stay in these regions, was transported distances greater than ten kilometers.

361 504 The most important ports of the coast of La Guajira, from west to east, are Ahuyama; Manaure, center of the salt industry; Cardón and Carrizal, pearl fishing centers; San José de Bahía Honda, on the bay of the same name, also engaged in the salt industry, and Puerto Estrella, center of the maritime traffic of motorized sailing boats plying between the islands of Aruba and Curaçao, and Puerto López.

132 [3] La Guajira is a semidesert region, a condition to which
133 four essential factors contribute, in our opinion: 1) the presence of sandy soil which absorbs the water of the small arroyos which flow from the mountain ridges; 2) the constant trade winds which blow strongly from the northeast over the peninsula and tend to temper the climate somewhat; 3) the lack of any real relief with elevations of importance which could act as a barrier to the clouds laden with moisture which are blown by the force of the winds toward the interior regions of the continent; 4) the high atmospheric temperatures which reach 42°C. in the shade at noon and are only slightly tempered by the trade winds and sea breezes.

These factors largely determine the hydrography of the peninsula in which, it may be said, there are only two permanent rivers, the Río Hacha, which forms the boundary with the neighboring department of Magdalena, and the arroyo Paraguichón, which marks the boundary with the republic of Venezuela. Beyond this the region is subject to the seasonal cycle of rainfall, which divides itself into a completely dry summer season with only rare light showers in what might be called spring (approximately in April) and a winter season with violent rains. This last season covers approximately the months of September to December/January, while the first, with the exception of the occasional rains in spring already mentioned, covers the remaining months of the year.

All these facts convert the peninsula during the summer
133 season into a true desert without vegetation, with the earth
134 covered with loose sand, particles of which are blown into the
[164] air by the prevailing winds, causing considerable trouble to travelers and even giving rise to eye infections among the natives. But in winter, when the abundant and copious rains have fallen, the soil, which in parts is below sea level, becomes so flooded that at times all land communications are totally obstructed even on improved [herradura] roads; the dry beds of currents of water are converted into true arroyos, water holes into ponds, and everything is an immense sea of fresh water.

One must also take into account the presence of some few
133 lakes, such as Guaraguarao, near Marañamana; Soledad, 20
312 kilometers south of Pájaro; Carazúa, approximately 30 kilometers west of Ríohacha; Sararapa, near Puerto López; and Cuisa,

[3 cont.]

133 312 adjacent to the hamlet of Roble; also one must consider the water holes, shallow depressions in the ground which store rain water for some time and are utilized as watering places for livestock. Besides these sources of water, [4] the Guajiro digs wells [casimbas] in the dry beds of arroyos, generally, having to excavate to depths of 30 vara at times to reach the underground water. [653] Windmills, which the Water Department of the Ministry of National Economy has been constructing for some years past, have helped to solve the water problem as have at a few dams, such as those in Ipanarú and Garrapatamana.

137 The factors which we have been describing determine vegetation in La Guajira, which is mainly comprised of thorny creepers, small thickets, cactus, thorn trees, and some wooded areas, especially in the mountain ridges and their spurs, where one finds an abundance of divi-divi, the totumo, indigo, the caraño, [a resinous gum tree], guayacan, the cedar, oak, cherry, and olive, the last two being fruit trees. On the banks of the coves and bays the mangrove grows abundantly.

During the rainy season in the peninsula, the sandy soil is covered with grass and brambles and briars and the woods [montes] become green again, giving a splendid background of color to the whole countryside, but in the summer season all the trees lose their foliage and look like burned logs; the smaller plants disappear, leaving the surface bare to the mercies of the burning sand and showing as characteristic patches the tall cacti with arms raised like great candelabra. The only different shades of color are provided by the olive trees, which never dry out and always show their fresh green foliage and darker fruit, and by some small oases of vegetation on the shores of ponds and water holes.

221 For this same reason the economy of La Guajira and the people's life in general swings like a great pendulum between two extremes — summer and winter. Their principal activity, stock grazing, requires rainfall to maintain pasture and to provide water in the water holes and wells. Agriculture, their other occupation, requires sufficient humidity for the germination of the seed and for maintaining the life of the plants. Winter in La Guajira means good living, abundance, satisfaction. Summer,

[4 cont.]
221 on the other hand, is a synonym of hunger, misery, and of death.

The conditions of their geographical situation and the oc-
221 cupation of stock grazing, to which the Indians have devoted
361 themselves since the Conquest, have accentuated their nomadic
233 character because of the need to bring their herds to places where the indispensable pasture and water are available. Furthermore, this need has held back the formation of towns in the true sense of the word, as what is called a ranchería ["hamlet"] in La Guajira, is nothing more than two or three huts of wood and thatch, inhabited by people related to each other and which may be several kilometers away from other rancherías. The presence of water at minimum distances greatly influences the location [5] of these habitations, so that the occupants are not obliged to walk long distances.

177 Only in those localities where the influences of civilizados
361 [generally, nonnatives] are greatly felt do we find what we may call urban centers, but in these the foreign element is more in evidence than the aboriginal. Such for example is the case of Uribia, capital of the Comisaría; Nazaret, a mission center; Maicao, Puerto Estrella, and Carraipía, points of trade with Venezuela, Aruba, Curaçao, and the interior of the country; and Manaure and Bahía Honda, centers of the salt industry.

* * *

175 The Guajiro Indian was never completely conquered.
648 Throughout the Conquest and the colonization, he kept up a series of wars with the Spanish authorities, whom he learned always to resist, thus maintaining his independence. But he kept up his trade relations with the whites, not only Spaniards but Europeans in general, who reached his shores where they established stations for fishing and the pearl trade, as well as with the group of Spaniards resident in Ríohacha, the western limit of the peninsula.

175 These contacts with European civilization were slowly
177 changing their ways of life in the major part of its aspects, whenever the Guajiro incorporated a series of relatively new elements

[5 cont.]

175 into his culture, especially into the economy, some of their
177 social institutions, and even in the aspect of their racial composition. Acculturation has been greatly accelerated in recent years due to the ever increasing presence of foreign elements in
[648] La Guajira Peninsula, facilitated by the intervention of the government in this administrative section, by the development of communication, and by the commercial possibilities that dealing with the natives presents.

105 The fundamental change in the Guajiro's life occurred in
175 their economy. Until the arrival of the conquistadors, accord-
177 ing to the data available, the Guajiro were a hunting and fishing people who lived in a constant state of nomadism to the point of having no true habitations, as has been stated by different chroniclers of Conquest times. They also practiced a rudimentary agriculture, mainly the cultivation of corn and yucca, the bases of their vegetable food and of their principal drinks.

With the establishment of stock raising centers by the
[648] Spaniards in the regions bordering on La Guajira, the natives found a new source of subsistence. They started a series [6] of thefts from the haciendas which enabled them to obtain animals suited for raising, which adapted wonderfully to the normal conditions of their territory, where during the winter season pasture grows spontaneously, pasture which previously had served only to feed the deer and other herbivorous animals which form part of the fauna of La Guajira.

With the introduction of this new economic element the native began, step by step, to change his economy of fishing, hunting, and rudimentary agriculture into a new system based principally on stock grazing. His state as a nomadic hunter was transformed to that of herdsman, also nomadic because of the geographic conditions we have just described in previous paragraphs. They also changed their mode of transport by learning to use horses and asses, and even their tactics of war were appreciably changed once they could make use of horses in their battles, placing them thereby on an equal footing with the Spanish conquistador; as in addition to this decisive element,
[439] they could also count on firearms obtained in the pearl trade with foreign ships which came up their coast.

[6 cont.]

105 177 However, at the beginning the fundamental change in their economy did not affect their most characteristic social institutions. They preserved, almost to the present, their family organization based on the uterine line of kinship and all the other institutions which derive from, or are directly or indirectly related, to it. Only now with the presence of an ever increasing number of foreign elements who are attracted to La Guajira territory by different circumstances is the Indian gradually losing these fundamental ideas of his organization and beginning to change them, forced to do so by events, to the point that today it is becoming difficult to decide up to what point a social phenomenon is autochthonous and to what point it is impregnated with new ideas brought in by evangelists, government and military officials, and traders.

144 175 In the racial aspect the phenomenon shows up less strongly, although, as in other aspects, it has been gradually accelerating as means of communication develop and the contraband between the islands of Aruba and Curaçao, the department of Magdalena, and the port of Maracaibo increase. Racial mixing [mestizaje] began in the colony not only between Spaniards and Indians, as happened in the greater part of Latin America, but also with the Negroes who were acquired as slaves from the Dutch and British slave traders in exchange for pearls. Naturally, this mixture was of insignificant proportions, but [7] at the present time it is developing more rapidly, stemming from the element, also Negroid, of the coastal areas of Colombia and Lake Maracaibo. In spite of all this, at the present time one can still find a large percentage of the pure element in La Guajira, especially in the regions distant from the traffic with Maracaibo or with the interior of Colombia, or relatively isolated from civilizado centers of La Guajira such as Uribia, Puerto Estrella, Puerto López, etc.

• • •

132 731 In the past five to six years La Guajira has suffered extremely severe summers which have almost completely crushed its economic bases, stock grazing and agriculture, for scarcely enough rainfall has fallen to save their pastures or their harvests.

[7 cont.]

132 731 Consequently at this time, the Indian faces a situation of misery that has brought him to seek monetary income either as a worker in the maritime saltworks or as a herdsman in the neighboring haciendas of Venezuela and Colombia; or if he is obstinate in his attachment to his native soil, he has to put up with conditions of hunger, bond service, and even slavery in his own territory.

166 464 The lack of water has been the main factor leading to the mass emigration of entire native families to the nearest centers of trade and work; there they enroll themselves as paid farm workers; or simply beg for charity, which is frequently seen in the streets and plazas of Maracaibo; or apply themselves to some other trade such as the making of charcoal to be sold in Ríohacha; or work in the loading and unloading of ships in neighboring ports.

* * *

121 114 All these facts that we have been describing and the little that was known of this interesting Colombian aboriginal community led the Institute of Ethnology and Archaeology of the Ministry of National Education of Colombia to organize an expedition to study for a reasonable period of time the greater part of the characteristic social phenomena of this group of people, the actual social situation of the natives confronted by the new conditions of life, the anthropological aspect, the language, etc. This decision was put into effect with the ethnographic expedition of 1947, which, during the months of July, August, and September, traveled over a great part of the territory making the corresponding studies. [8] This expedition was composed of: the investigators, Licentiate Milcíades Chaves, Licentiate Virginia Gutiérrez de Pineda Giraldo, Señora María Rosa de Recasens, and the author.

The result of these investigations is the work we now present, the first of a series of publications which will cover the major part of the aspects of the material and spiritual life of the Guajiro.

The work to which these few lines serve as an introduction is based on facts carefully gathered by us in the field, especially by my wife Licentiate Virginia Gutiérrez de Pineda Giraldo, who kindly handed over data to be studied and added to ours, and we

[8 cont.]

114 121 now present it embodied under this title Aspectos de la Magia en la Guajira, a title which not only covers what has been known as magic to the Indian but also many of his mental and sentimental attitudes, the classification of which would be difficult in any other way. [9] [Maps of La Guajira Comisaría on p. 9. Page 10 is blank.]

[11]

II

Life Cycle of the Guajiro Shaman

*756 787 Symptomatology. A woman shaman [piache], referring to the bodily symptoms which presented themselves as an indication of her calling, mentioned the following: She began to see before her eyes a kind of little star which fell upon her in the manner of a golden rain, the first sign, according to her, of her person being possessed by a spirit. Her sight became clouded, and she fell to the ground in a faint; she remained stretched out there for some time. Then she very slowly regained consciousness. After this first attack of possession, she felt quite well for two or three days, after which she woke up one morning with a sensation of intense cold such as one feels at the beginning of an attack of malaria; she also broke out in a sticky sweat all over her body; then she was overcome, vomited blood, and remained unconscious until afternoon, lying like one dead in her hammock. She began to recover again, and the spirit came down to her, for she seemed to hear a voice that ordered her, "Eat manilla (2), for if [276 439]

*756 you do not, you will die." On receiving this order, she immediately told her relatives to bring her manilla, and one of them went with a gold necklace of hers to look for an old woman shaman that she might come to see if our informant had a spirit and, if it were true,

2. A tobacco paste imported by the natives from Ríohacha (Colombia) or from Maracaibo (Venezuela).

[11 cont.]

*756 might dedicate herself to her teaching. The woman shaman called for the purpose recognized at once that our informant had the spirit appropriate to her calling and began the tutelage of the new curer [curandera].

Another woman shaman narrated the first symptoms of her
[881] vocation in this way. When she had reached the age of reason,
that is, about ten or eleven years of age (the time of the initiation
for the change from girl to young woman: the beginning of
puberty), she felt one day a need to perform a bodily function.
She went into the woods to do this, but no matter how much she
tried she was unable to do it. This situation repeated itself several times. At night she dreamed that a spirit descended and,
[787] taking her by the hand, led her to a stream where there was a big
field of plantain and ahuyama. At sunrise the next day [12] she
woke up depressed and trembling. She heard a voice in her ear
[226] saying, "Eat manilla and macuira (3)." She frequently lost consciousness and when she came to again was weak and trembling. When she ate what was ordered, the shivering and feeling of illness disappeared as if by enchantment, and she remained in perfect health. She was going to be a shaman. Her mother, who was already one, announced this fact and prepared to begin her training according to the rules.

*756 From the personal statements of these two shamans which
we have just reported and from other relative data that we have
787 been able to obtain by word of mouth from other informants, we
171 can deduce the following: 1) The graduations to the rank of
shaman (the illumination, we might better call it) are revelations
of the wanurú ("spirit of death") which enters the body of certain
persons chosen by it, that they may exercise the office of curer
magicians. As a proof of the presence of the spirit in new
shamans through manifestations of revelation, we may see among
the Bororó tribe of Brazil, for example, how the spirit appears
in the shape of a monkey or water hog (4), and among the

3. A plant with a leaf similar to that of tobacco.

4. Métraux, Alfred. Le Chamanisme chez les indiens de l'Amérique du Sud Tropicale

*756 787 171 [12 cont.]

[Shamanism Among the Indians of Tropical South America], I, p. 203.

Apinagé [Apinaye] shamans are designated "by the soul of some close relative who puts them in communication with the world of the spirits, from whom they obtain their medical science." (5)

5. Métraux. Op. cit., I, 203.

Hubert and Mauss, referring to this same matter, state the following: "Magic virtue is acquired by revelation in the majority of Australian tribes. Normally, this revelation is produced in the course of a dream or in an ecstatic or semiecstatic state. This revelation is generally the work of spirits, spirits of the dead, pure spirits, and probably very frequently the work of spirits less clearly classified, whose qualities are not defined and whose mythical figure floats between the shades of mankind, the animal, and the divinity of nature (6)." And with respect to revelation

6. Origen de los poderes mágicos en las sociedades australianas [Origin of Magic Powers in Australian Societies] by Hubert and Mauss, [illegible] 235.

they tell us again: "It is possible and even probable that the theme of the revelation by the spirits of the dead is at least confounded in one and the same complex myth with the theme of the revelation by pure spirits." (7)

7. Ibid. [13]

*756 787 786 2) This spirit reveals its presence by means of a sudden illness, as we have just seen in previously mentioned incidents, or by other variable symptoms, but they are usually actual hysterical attacks, in which the spirit manifests itself by strong convulsions and by loss of consciousness to signify it has entered into possession of the person destined to become a shaman.

[13 cont.]

*756 764 With respect to the hysterical attacks so characteristic of shamans, there exists considerable confirmation of this in a fact which is connected with the death of these curers. Custom demands that when one of them dies, it is essential that their wake be kept for three consecutive days and nights, because as these attacks occur frequently and at times last for a considerable time, there is a fear that the shaman may not be really dead and that consequently he may be buried alive if the mourners do not wait for a reasonable time to see if he recovers.

*756 276 3) A magic plant, tobacco, is involved in the making of a new shaman in two ways: (a) The aspiring shaman must chew it for several consecutive days in order to enter into a state of *ecstasy* and so provoke the absorption of the spirit by his person. One must remember that at the moment the initiate has an attack, a piece of tobacco or *manilla* is put into his mouth. When [827] he recovers consciousness, he belches loudly because of the action of the tobacco, and these belches are considered to be canticles of praise and gratitude to the spirit which desires to reside in him. The establishment of relations between the spirit and the medicine-man aspirant by means of a magic plant, such as the tobacco we [771] have referred to, is found also among the Conibo: "The apprentice shaman of the Conibo of the Ucayali receives his medical science from a spirit. To enter into communication with the latter, the shaman drinks a decoction of tobacco and smokes as much as he can in a hermetically sealed hut." (8) [Cited in French.]

8. Métraux. *Op. cit.*, 204.

*756 787 (b) The diviner must see in the different changes in the embers of the tobacco whether the individual whose future he foretells after an attack of illumination will become a true shaman or not. His verdict is final.

4) Dreams, or at least hallucinations, are decisive factors in the determination of the quality of shaman.

*756 5) The *vocation* of shaman cannot be renounced. Better said, it does not depend upon the individual himself; once the symptoms have appeared and the diviner has given a favorable

*756 [13 cont.]
verdict, the decision must be accepted; otherwise he will die for having disobeyed the orders of the spirit. [14]

*756 114 171

Métraux, referring to the abnormal physical and psychic characteristics of the medicine man says: "Im Thurn" (*Among the Indians of Guiana*. London, 1883, p. 334) "declares that among the Indians of British Guiana shamans are recruited from among epileptics, but this affirmation, which no other authority confirms, could well have been inspired by the behavior of the *piai* in the course of his trances." (9) [Cited in French.]

9. Métraux. *Op. cit.*, I, 201.

On our part, we can say that we also were tempted to classify as epileptic the attacks which the shaman suffers at the beginning of what we have called his vocation, since the symptoms described make one easily believe that they are such. But when we learned of the curious and interesting aspect of sexual taboo, possibly more severe for the woman than the man, which we shall describe fully in future chapters, we were then inclined to think of them as a form of hysteria, and for this reason we have called them hysterical attacks.

It might be thought that the effect of the tobacco or some other narcotic is what brings about this state of trance or ecstasy, but one must bear in mind that one of the clear signs of the illumination is the attack which occurs before taking the narcotic or stupefying drug. This makes us disagree with Professor Métraux when he states: "No anomaly or physical or physiological particularity seems to have been chosen as the symptom of a special predisposition for the practice of shamanism." (10) [Cited in French.]

10. *Ibid.*, I, 202.

Furthermore, the visions and loss of consciousness are confirmed by Kurt Nimuendajú, cited by Professor Métraux when referring to the Bororó:"... a spirit appears before him in the form of a monkey or water hog and demands of him his submission. His head whirls, a thousand colors dance before his eyes: he has

*756 [14 cont.]
114 become a *bari*." (11) [Cited in French.]
171

11. Métraux. *Op. cit.*, I, 203.

We find another proof of the sick personality of the shaman, which would appear to be an almost indispensable requisite of the profession, among the Yaruro of the plains of Venezuela. "Every community has its own priest or musician. This is a shaman or *piache*. He is a more or less retarded being from the psycho-physiological point of view and one whose soul — he says — journeys to the land of the gods during religious ceremonies." (12) [15]

12. Le Besnerais, Henry. *Algunos aspectos del río Capanaporo y de sus indios Yaruros* [Some aspects of the Capanaporo River and of its Yaruro Indians], p. 18.

*756 *Period of training*. Continuing with the story of the woman shaman with which we began this chapter about magic in La Guajira, we shall now see how the older shaman called in for the purpose carried out the training of the aspirant. She transmitted all her knowledge in a long period of training. She took hold of the apprentice, sat her on her knees, made her take up the ceremonial maraca, and with her own hand showed and directed her in all the required movements. She proceeded to invoke the spirits and to make her pupil repeat all the motions, positions, prayers, and canticles. This operation was carried out several times during the day and at times during the night. Furthermore, the old shaman was always on the alert for the various orders and indications which the spirit imparted to the pupil. After some time had elapsed in this training, the spirit said to the instructress: "Withdraw. Now the young woman can be a shaman." Afterward it gave instructions regarding the *fiesta* of culmination about which we shall learn in the corresponding section.

During the period of training the teacher shaman demanded from the initiate some proofs of her knowledge [*ciencia*]. On one occasion she said, "Take a firebrand and make an attempt at divination." The girl obeyed and proceeded to divine as she had

[15 cont.]

*756 been instructed. In another test her teacher called on her to take blood from a sacrificed ram so that she could perform the suitable rites. The initiate took in her hands the gourd vessel holding the blood, and the spirit then immediately descended into her. The apprentice began to tremble convulsively, and the spirit ordered her to throw the blood over the hut, which was done automatically by the girl who thus emerged triumphant in this test.

The training of the initiate in the second case does not differ from that of the first except in one detail. The mother of the future shaman – who also was one herself – took the girl between her legs and massaged her head and her body all over with her hands.

The period of training is decisive for the initiate shaman to learn how to make contact with the spirits, and through them with the world of the supernatural. In spite of the revelation and of the initiate being already possessed by the spirit in a certain way, it is essential that she learn what we might call the external cult, that is, the system of movements, invocations, canticles, handling of the maraca, chewing of tobacco, etc., in order to be able to propitiate the indispensable presence of the protector spirit or spirits. Métraux, referring to this aspect, says the following: "The second type of initiation does not differ from the [16] first except for the intervention of a master who not only instructs the pupil in the technique of the profession, but, above all, prepares him to enter into direct contact with the supernatural. Whether the initiation is effected by the intermediary of a spirit or of an instructor, no candidate for the title of shaman can practice it unless he is assure[illegible]ter a vision of the protection of one or numerous spirits." (13) [Cited in French.]

13. Métraux. Op. cit., I, 206.

*756
796 Initiation fiesta. Let us go back to our first story: When the spirit ordered the instructor to suspend the lessons because the initiate was sufficiently trained to be a shaman, it also told her to instruct the girl's family to organize a chicha-maya dance, which would last all that night and the following day and night

[16 cont.]

*756 until dawn. For the dance they must kill sufficient goats for all 796 the dancers to eat, accompanying this food with roasted corn. The men and women who would be taking part in the dance ceremony should come painted with annatto [bija], the women could be single or married. Once the dance had finished, at dawn of the second night, the meat of the sacrificed animals was to be piled on a heap of leaves, and the old shaman would come to "shamanize" [piachar] (14) it, spitting her saliva impregnated with the manilla she was chewing on the meat; she would also "shamanize" the novice. Until this had been done the meat could not be eaten by the guests. Those present could then take the meat so prepared, but they must go in a direction when they walked away to eat it opposite to the direction taken by the shaman when she came to perform her ritual ceremonies over it. [782] The consumption of this meat by the others would be done in honor of the spirits whom the shaman wanted to propitiate at this time.

Similarly, there is little difference between the external cult of the rite of passage of the second case and the previous one. Once the spirit announced that the initiate knew how to invoke it, a fiesta was organized at its request which lasted for three days. For this celebration they sacrificed 20 sheep and a steer, and they [273] danced the chicha-maya. In addition, they made the already mentioned distribution of chicha and rum to the guests. During these three days of fiesta, the mother — the shaman in this case — continued to instruct the initiate in all matters relating to her future duties. At dawn on the third day the novice graduated.

*756 Final period of preparation: Let us continue with the first case. After the dance with all the accompanying ceremonial was

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14. We have found it necessary to use the verb "shamanize" [piachar] to refer to the ceremonies which the shaman [piache] performs during his cures and other functions. Purists of the language will please forgive us.

[16 cont.]

*756 over, the young shaman [17] was secluded for two months in her
home. She dedicated this period to practicing chewing tobacco,
and the act of invoking the spirits, the way of curing the sick,
bringing rainfall, "shamanizing," animals, keeping pestilence
away, etc. The maraca and the crown (kiara, in Guajiro) were
made by her during this seclusion, although they could have been
*756 bought or ordered to be made by others. At the end of this two
months' seclusion, it was essential, in order to terminate the
787 young shaman's cycle of initiation into shamanism, to prepare
796 ten containers of corn chicha and to invite many Indians from
different sections to be present at the true graduation of the
initiate. That night, while the others danced and drank, the
young shaman remained practicing her arts. It is common on
these occasions for the spirit to approach the aspiring shaman and
say, for example: "Go look for an animal of such-and-such
characteristics (it describes the desired animal minutely in all
its details) and kill it. If you disobey me you will faint, have
an attack, and you will never become a shaman." The young
initiate then passes on the order to her relatives, who must
hasten to look for the animal described by the spirit and sacrifice
it. When the celebration has ended, the spirit returns to tell the
[301 young girl: "Hang up ten necklaces in your room so that I may
426] come down and help you." (These necklaces must be made of
gold beads). The aspiring shaman acquires these necklaces with
the help of her relatives and friends, even on loan, and hangs
[182] them in her room so that she can "shamanize." The spirit,
grateful for her ready obedience and for the offering, approaches
her once again and says: "Now you will make a truly good
[834] shaman." And it warns her: "Now you may not sleep (cohabit)
with your husband."

*756 Exercising the profession. When all these rites and cere-
monies preparatory to entering the way of life of the shaman have
787 been complied with, the person chosen, as his protector spirit
affirms, may then dedicate himself to that calling. The spirit
itself has conferred such power. Better still, it has descended
into the novice; it has entered his body to accompany him in
every professional act, to communicate the arts indispensable or

[17 cont.]

*756 787 carrying out his function as community curer, and witch so that he will be able to act with certainty in curing illnesses, in the propitiation of the rainfall indispensable for good harvests, as well as in his tasks of keeping away pestilences and epidemics which could decimate the people under his care.

As has been seen in the section treating the period of training, this is limited first of all to transmitting to the new shaman the most successful way of insuring that the spirit can reach him. His science in no manner implies that he possess knowledge relating to the medicinal value of plants, of animals, etc., but it does imply that the process of apprenticeship, or better said his science, [18] is based on the successful invocation of the spirit, which has the true wisdom, which is the only curer in reality, the all-powerful able to propitiate rain and cast out pestilences and epidemics and whose science is manifested through the medium of the medicine man whenever the spirit wishes to carry out its designs. The shaman by himself and for himself is worthless. He is an ordinary man, subject as are others to the evil influences of the spirits of sickness and death. His fundamental value rests in the absorption into himself of a powerful spirit which places him on a footing of equality with the spirits of the other world, and in many cases even on a superior one, when it enables him frequently to emerge triumphant in the cure of sickness.

*756 755 One has to emphasize in the personality of the Guajiro shaman the fact that he has almost exclusively the function of making contact with the supernatural world, and it is by this means that he endeavors to effect the cure of his patients. He is partially or totally ignorant of medicine based on herbs, animals, parts of animals, or any other type of cure other than that exercised directly by the protector spirits that use him as their intermediary.

As will be seen in the corresponding chapters, the majority of child cures are effected by female diviners with the indicated methods, which are based on what is called participative or contaminant magic. Also, the herbs actually very few — which [278 847] are used to cause abortion, to restrict the growth of the fetus,

[18 cont.]

*756 755 [208 847] to bring on lactation, to gain weight, etc., are partly public knowledge and partly privately known by a few families who traditionally preserve the secret of their use for their personal benefit.

By what has been previously stated we see how the ceremony of healing is a perpetual invocation of the spirit, a continual fear that it might withdraw its aid for whatever motive, and a perennial anxiety to satisfy its slightest wish in order to obtain the success sought. To give evidence for this we shall see how the Guajiro shaman effects a cure when he has been called in to handle one.

[431] First of all, before he initiates such activities, he demands a gift. For this reason whenever a native needs the services of the shaman for magico-medical attention for some relative, he goes to present himself to the shaman with a gold necklace or some other valuable present.

171 *756 755 Each time the shaman goes to cure a sick person he takes with him two maracas. This custom is rather widespread in South America, where the magic power of the maraca appears to be extraordinary and is commonly accepted, although with some variations from tribe to tribe whether in the [19] quality of its different parts, in the artifacts adornment, in the manner of using it, etc. To corroborate this it is sufficient to quote Professor Métraux again, who says, in reference to the apprentice shaman: "During his initiation the novice learns to make use of the accessories indispensable to the magic art. The most important of all, that which in some manner symbolizes the profession is the maraca or rattle made from a calabash containing some seeds or pebbles and provided with a handle." (15) [Cited in French.]

15. Métraux. *Op. cit.*, I, 217.

[352] The medicine man accommodates himself in a seat especially reserved for such occasions and carved in wood in the form of an animal, but if such an artifact is lacking, he will use any convenient seat. The custom of using a seat of this type is also found in the Guianas. "The wooden seat is an equally indispensable accessory for the shaman of the Guianas. It is often carved in the form of a jaguar, an animal that plays an important part in the

171 [19 cont.]
*756 invocations of the spirits and in the metamorphosis of the shaman." (16) [Cited in French.] The shaman moves his torso in gyra-
755

16. Ibid., I, 218.

tion. When he is in trance and effecting a cure which requires the invocation of the spirit, no noise must be made as this will cause the spirit to become frightened and to flee; and being left without his protector spirit, the shaman will suffer violent fits and fall to the ground in severe convulsions. [276] The shaman always carries a piece of manilla in these cases; he chews it and becomes intoxicated with the juice, which induces him to sing with greater verve. The juice of the manilla also serves to spray [824] the body of the patient as well as the walls and all around the house to frighten away the malignant spirit. This custom of the magic use of tobacco is also very common in America; not to overexpand the subject we limit ourselves to giving a simple example cited by Pauly with reference to the Araona Indians of Bolivia: "They use tobacco dust mixed with coca to cure their sick and ward off the evil spirits, chewing it and spitting the juice on the body of the sick person. They also spit it at the heavens to calm the storms and at the river when it is in flood." (17)

[113]

17. Pauly, Antonio. Ensayo de Etnografía Americana. Viajes y Exploraciones [Essay on American Ethnology. Voyages and Explorations], VI, 128.

755 The treatment really begins with a chant of invocation to the spirits. While the ceremony is performed the shaman continually chews tobacco and he rubs the juice formed by the saliva and the juice of the plant over the body of the patient; and immediately after this, he energetically sucks several consecutive times at the affected parts of the body of the sick man to draw [753] out [20] the malignancy. (The sickness that the native has, no matter what may be its special characteristics or from whence it may have arisen, is derived from the malevolent action of the

[20 cont.]
755 wanurú spirits of the dead, who have arrows similar to those used
[753] by the Indians for hunting, which are shot at individuals to cause
them sickness and pain.) The chant of the shaman is suspended
only while he is sucking the affected parts of the sick person's
body; then he immediately continues it again and returns to the
spitting, the rubbing, and the sucking of the painful areas. The
755 sick person should be confined to his home, and furthermore his
758 bed should be enclosed by curtains in the manner of a second
room within the main one. None may enter this place without
the express consent of the shaman. However, the witch sometimes
permits the presence of a relative of the sick person, generally
the sister or the wife, who can act as nurse, especially
during the moments when the shaman is resting. When he renews
his curative acts, they must withdraw again.

755 The songs which the shaman intones tell how his spirit is
753 searching for the soul of the sick man which the spirit of sickness
[533] and death has carried away to unknown regions which are
known only to it and to the spirit of the shaman. Often the
sick person's spirit does not let itself be caught by the shaman,
or it can happen that his soul is imprisoned, held by act and
wish of the wanurú, which can cause the shaman a great deal of
work. When through the intervention of his protector spirit he
succeeds in recovering the spirit of the patient, he must pay the
755 wanurú that held it prisoner a ransom for its liberation. This
782 spirit will then ask through the mouth of the shaman for whatever
gifts it may fancy. The shaman on his part transmits the oppressing
spirit's demands to the sick man's relatives. These demands
take the form of requests for animals — cattle, goats,
sheep, etc., — of a certain color and special markings; ornaments
of certain sizes and shapes; cloth, food and, at times,
things very difficult to find. The sick man's relatives hurry
to look everywhere for the requested items, and once found they
present them to the shaman and place them, if they are animals,
near him where he is "shamanizing." Other objects, such as
necklaces, cloth, etc., are placed in his hands. If the orders
*756 are not immediately complied with and in accordance with the
755 slightest detail, the shaman suffers very severe fits and attacks
and has to withdraw from assisting the patient. This is because,

[20 cont.]

*756 as he is only the spirit's intermediary in the matter of the 755 negotiation between it and the patient and his relatives to free the sick man from its influence, the shaman must respond to all the demands that the spirit has made. If the sick man is cured, the shaman keeps all the gifts that were requested through him by the spirit that caused the sickness and those that his protector [21] spirit claimed for its part in the cure. If the treatment is not successful, it is usual for all gifts to be returned to the patient's relatives, although sometimes this is not done and the shaman takes possession of them, stating that they are sacred, that they belong to the spirits that intervened in the attempt at curing the sick man although this has not been successful.

Shamans state that when they are practicing their curing ceremonies, while they are endeavoring to wrest the patient's soul from its prison, they are carefully observing the sick man to determine whether his cure is possible or not. If it is obvious that it is not, they declare him past hope, after being well assured that the individual cannot be saved and after making sure that everything has been done to effect his cure. They also state that it is quite common when they are engaged in the exercise *756 of their functions for their spirits to chat freely with them, at 775 which times they refer to events which are about to happen and 787 to their own destiny in the other life, in other words, what the shaman will be doing as a spirit once he ultimately dies. It is common to hear a spirit say, while conversing with the shaman in trance, "When you die you will know a country where there are many towns you know not of, crossed by wide, blue rivers."

Before proceeding further we consider it of interest to call attention to these latter words which the shaman claims he hears from his protector spirit, as they represent, in a certain way, the idea of a special heaven for these curers, a notion of life beyond the tomb which we shall see in greater detail later and, above all, the image of that new life; towns...crossed by wide, blue rivers, an ideal as logical as any when one takes into account the geographical situation of La Guajira, a land in which rivers and ravines, or even minor arroyos, are practically unknown due to the winds that dominate the peninsula.

[21cont.]

When the patient shows signs of improving, a *fiesta* is organized
755 consisting of *chicha-maya* dances and feasting. For this
796 event they prepare in advance all that will be offered to the
participants; *chicha* made from chewed corn, plain or sweetened
with panela according to the economic situation of the sick man's
[534] family. The dance lasts one or more days and nights, as ordered
by the shaman, the only musical instrument used being the drum.
In order to end the *fiesta*, two or three steers and several goats
and sheep are killed if the hosts are rich. At four or five o'clock
in the morning, according to the shaman's wishes, the sick person
[515] is taken from his bed, and the curer himself bathes him with
soap and water, after which he is again carried indoors and is
permitted to stay up, but not to leave his dwelling. Slowly he
resumes normal living and the everyday diet. If the patient
should have a relapse, [22] the treatment is repeated. The
process of these cures may last up to two months, according to
the patient's condition.

No one is actually invited to the *fiesta* which is organized
[574] by order of the shaman when he has succeeded in curing a
patient. When people find out that such a *fiesta* is about to be
given from the characteristic beating of the drum, they approach
without being invited and take part, joining in dancing
[273] the *chich-amaya*. The women are offered a bowl of *chicha* made
from chewed corn to take to their homes to drink there with their
families. Men are given rum or *chicha*. The women wear with
291 great pride their long ample robes, which cover them to the
755 ankles, their *waireñas*, or leather sandals with toe pieces made
796 of knitted wool and adorned with large tassels of the same material,
556 and a *pañuelo* around their heads, the corners of which
hang down their backs. If they are wealthy enough, they complete
their personal adornment with anklets and bracelets of
coral and necklaces of gold or *tuma*. The men also wear their
finest robes, which, hanging from one of their shoulders, cover
the upper part of their bodies. This is complemented by a
wide sash used to support the loincloth [*guayuco*], wider than
the one commonly used, that is, than that used in their daily
755 work. If animals are sacrificed — which depends on the wealth
796

755 [22 cont.]
796 of the patient or of his family — then those attending are presented with a good portion of meat.

*756 Shamanistic treatment of animals. When pestilence breaks out among a Guajiro Indian's animals, he has no other
231 known recourse to repel it than to seek the services of a shaman.
755 As he already knows in a way the accustomed ceremonial in such cases, he prepares days beforehand a sufficient quantity of corn chicha, which is used in the chicha-maya dances, and he invites a large group of women to come to the dance. He then calls in the shaman, who, once arrived on the scene, has all the animals collected and enclosed in a large corral. While this operation is being carried out, the shaman begins to prepare himself for the ceremony, inviting his protector spirit to cast out the pestilence, and dressing himself (or better said, undressing himself) in a neighboring hut as is customary for the ceremony of the cure of human beings, keeping on his loincloth if he is a man and her dress if a woman. He then places a crown of wool on his head and readies the maraca, which he keeps in his hand during the entire event. Following this, he enters the place where the animals are, goes in among them, and turns himself around in circles about them, continually shaking the maraca and spitting on their bodies the juice from the manilla he is continually chewing. During all this time, he intones his ritual invocatory chants, [23] which are different from those used for the cure of humans, and he never stops shaking the maraca. This operation generally lasts for several days and is only suspended for those moments when the shaman rests. When he considers that the evil spirits which have caused the pestilence have been successfully driven off, he suspends his activities and orders for the fiesta to begin, which is started by the sacrifice of an animal, the distribution of chicha to those present, and the dance. The animals are driven to the fields while numerous gunshots are
[777] fired (in older times arrows were shot off). These are intended
[789] to complete the work of the shaman in driving off the evil spirits of the disease.

*756 Shamans' dreams. When a shaman dreams of a long trip
787 through unknown territory, it is an evident sign that he is due to
[761] die. When the dream is over, he attempts through "shamanizing"

[23 cont.]

*756 787 to divine his future by means of a firebrand, and sees that it does not burn or blaze. His spirit has abandoned him and no longer comes at his call. Finally, the spirit descends to him and says, "This has happened to you because you did not obey me on such-and-such an occasion."

Up to now there are two clear examples of the relation between unknown lands and death in the case of the shaman. Let us recall the talks held between the shaman and his protector spirit during the ceremony for curing a sick person, in which the protector spirit describes to him a marvelous country crossed by wide, blue rivers as a dwelling place to enter after death. Now this same representation reappears in his dream, which implies a vision of the world beyond the tomb to which he will shortly go.

[755] If during a curing ceremony he should dream that at some time during the dance which he has demanded for the total rehabilitation of the sick man he sees a group of rich Indian women arrive mounted on horses, bringing with them in a pitcher a small quantity of water or rum with which they bathe the sick person and then blow on him at midnight, this means that the sick man in question will recover completely and will not have a relapse.

751 *756 787 At other times the shaman may dream that someone is going to be killed. To avert the danger he goes to the relatives of the person dreamed of to order them to perform a sacrifice or ceremony such as the following. They must bring a heifer of a certain color, slaughter it at dawn, and bathe in its blood the Indian on whom the tragedy is to fall according to the dream. To end the ceremony they must hold a chicha-maya dance. The Indian referred to must follow strictly the orders of the shaman [24] otherwise, there is no doubt that a tragedy will befall him, so the natives affirm. (Cf. "Magic and Sacrifice.")

There is a story, for example, of a female shaman who dreamed that she should "shamanize" an Indian woman with rum and hold a chicha-maya dance, or otherwise death would rapidly overtake her. The woman of the dream did not obey the orders of the shaman, and a few days later she had a quarrel with her [762] husband, who struck her, and, broken-hearted over her husband's action, she hung herself from a tree at midnight.

[24 cont.]

*755 787 Shamans' dreams are interpreted by themselves in accordance with the elements that occur in them. We shall see how they do so.

If they dream that they see a burro tied to a post, turning continuously about it until it falls to the ground, it signifies that someone — the shaman will determine who — is going to die.

If in a dream they see a very swollen current of water, it implies that an interclan war will break out in the near future. If they dream of someone's death, this means that they are going to kill an animal, or it is simply the announcement of the death of the shaman himself. If, on the other hand, the dream refers to the death of an animal, it is a sign that some known person will be attacked by a serious sickness.

When the shaman dreams that a person has been bitten by a snake, that individual will be wounded by a poisoned arrow (imára), but, if during the dream some other person should kill the snake, it is a sign that both men involved in the action will have trouble and both will be wounded by poisoned arrows. If [614] in the dream two jaguars (representative animals of the Uriana clan) leap on someone, this person should be forewarned to be cautious in his relations with the Uriana, as the men of the Uriana clan are going to kill him.

Dreaming of fire is evidence of the presence of sickness accompanied by fevers; to dream of rain water in great abundance is a sure indication that in La Guajira, without stating exactly where, an important wake will be held in the near future, that is, that a wealthy Indian or Indian woman of good economic position is going to die. To see a male goat killed during a dream is to know that a boy is to be killed; to see a steer being sacrificed is to learn that an adult is to be killed. When the dream is about a small burro that is tied to a hitching post and circles around it and later falls down, this implies the death of a poor Indian. When the animal is a horse that makes the same circle, it implies the death of a wealthy Indian. To dream of blood always means a coming death in the group. [25]

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787 *756 It is not only the shamans' dreams which have the power of prediction among these Indians. Dreams of the Indians in general, whatever their social or economic position, are revelations of the future to which the others religiously pay attention. The Indians believe in these dreams with the same fervor with which they fear the dead and comply with every ceremony related to them. One may say without fear of error that the Guajiro believes that the individual, when he dreams, is in a superior position to when he is living his everyday waking life. His spirit has become detached from his body; it is free to roam, and for this reason it can get into communication with those other spirits which are able to transmit future events.

The great value of the shaman's dreams stems from the fact that they are commensurate not only with his personal spirit but also with his protector spirit which uses him as a medium to foretell the future and communicate the events that will develop in a future time, showing the shaman at the same time what means to employ to overcome those possible evil developments already revealed to him in his dreams.

776 *756 787 Protector spirits of the shamans. Every shaman has a set number of spirits that assist him in his magic practices and whose role is to counsel him while he is carrying out the functions of his office. For example, they tell him: "Suck there; give him such a herb; and as payment for my advice make me a gift of such-and-such value without loss of time." This matter of a gift, as we have already seen, is important because if it is not strictly complied with, the spirit leaves the shaman and will not come to his aid again. It is very difficult for him to regain its favor so that it will return and collaborate with him. If, however, the gift is made in full compliance with the spirit's wishes, it gives immediate and, in many cases, efficacious assistance with great pleasure. Besides all this, when the shaman has enemies he also receives advice from his spirits who tell him: " 'Shamanize' a great deal and every day because you have enemies and are in danger. Do it frequently so that the evil may disappear just as the rains do in summer."

Some shamans have as many as seven such spirits, and each one is called by a special canticle. Mareiwa (18), for example,

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18. This spirit, considered as the

*756 [25 cont.]

> 776 universal god of the Guajiro Indians
> 787 is none other than the protector divinity
> of rainfall and the propitiator of the
> harvests.

is invoked by a singular chant known by the name of fumayule, and wanurú, the spirit of sickness and of death by that of jirairay. The latter is the spirit that demands [26] offerings, the one that interposes himself in cases of sickness, impeding their cure, for it never wants to lose its hold on the sick person's soul it has imprisoned, so causing the illness. It is also the one which discusses with the shaman's protector spirits and the shaman himself the handing back of the patient's soul so that he can recover his lost
[775] health. We deem it necessary to make it clear that all the spirits of the dead are named wanurú; for this reason their number is immense. The only difference that we have been able to establish between the wanurú and the shaman's protector spirits lies, in our opinion, in the fact that the latter are the spirits of
171 shamans who have died but who wish to keep on carrying out
*756 their functions through others after death. Our statement is con-
775 firmed by Professor Métraux, who, quoting Tessman, affirms:
776 "The Campa and Amahuaca medicine men claim to receive their knowledge from some shaman, living or dead. Either the soul makes the advances and visits its pupil in a dream, or the novice, intoxicated with ayahuasca, sends his other self among the spirits to receive teaching." (19) [Cited in French.]

19. Métraux. Op. cit., I, 203.

And further along he states: "The auxiliary spirits can be of different kinds. Among the Taulipáng and the Roucouyenne [Rucuyen]" — according to Koch Grünberg — "they are the souls of former shamans, or spirits of plants or animals." And later: "The distinction between the two types of Bororo shamans is mainly based on the different origin of the spirits from which they derive their power. The shamans called bari are possessed by bope, ... which are either spirits of nature or souls of dead

[26 cont.]

771 colleagues. On the other hand, the *aroettawaraare* are mediums
775 chosen by the souls of ancestors and their main function is to
[776] serve as intermediaries between the world of the living and that
756 of the dead," according to Colbacchini. (20) [Cited in French.]

Hubert and Mauss, speaking of magic revelations by the dead among Australian tribes, state as follows: "The simplest manner in which the authors describe this revelation consists in stating that the parents' spirits are those that give magic power to their children. The precision is even greater when the author expressly states, as does Howitt, with respect to the Kulin on the Wimmera River that only young men who have seen their mother's spirit seated on her grave are capable of becoming wizards." (21) And specifically in one of the stories narrated to our colleague Chaves in La Guajira with relation to the shaman Umaralí, [27] we find the following statement: "Every afternoon Umaralí set out to walk to the cemetery to visit the grave of his aunt and to light fires to her memory — she having been a very wise shaman — but on one occasion he had a clear vision of his aunt for whom he was grieving, and she said to him: "Go, my son, to the region of Jarara, take my cloak and my maraca, visit the sick and "shamanize" them, and only thus will you find the true path." (22)

756 With respect to the number of each shaman's protector
775 spirits, we can state that Josefina, one of our personal infor-
776 mants, had eight, three male and the rest female. The names
by which these spirits were known were the following: *benawa*,

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20. Métraux. *Op. cit.*, I, 211.

21. Hubert and Mauss. *Op. cit.*

22. Chaves, Micíades. *Mitos, legendas*, etc. [Myths, Legends, etc.], p. 322.

[27 cont.]
*756 turpirawa, muchirawai, males; and anapaura, uríwatana, waré-
775 ké-narú, waiwána, and parárijuna, females.

776 The common spirit of sickness and death, wanurú, in its
malignant sense, can be possessed by a shaman, but its possession
[755] implies dangers as because of it the shaman can become insane,
foolish, or paralytic. It is such an aggressive, haughty, and hateful spirit that, when it turns against a shaman, does so so vindictively that he is compelled to ask all the other spirits to aid him against the jirairay or wanarú.

But shamans do not know the origin of the spirits in the majority of cases. They do not know from where they come, only that they come from an unknown place, dressed like aríjuna (civilizados). They are wanurú that assist them in the struggle against sickness, which is also called wanurú. The personal spirit of the shaman, as we have said, does not intervene directly in the healing. It is those other spirits, the ones that have taken possession of him ever since he was initiated into the magic arts, which do so. His personal spirit does not have a special name, nor does the personal spirit of any of the Indians. Only on the shaman's death does his spirit take the common name wanurú and a special one if he has been a very outstanding curer.

In general terms, two other classes of spirits exist: that of the shaman himself, of which we have already spoken, and that of the diviner. These two spirits, however, can be absorbed by one person, but this absorption requires two special preparations, one for each activity. The more common procedure is for the shaman to be a diviner also, as this will help him considerably in carrying out his functions, for, on being [28] called to accomplish a cure, he can by means of his prophetic art consult with the firebrand or the tobacco (Cf. "Magic and Medicine") and find out if the sick person in question will recover. In accordance with the results of his findings, he will or will not try to cure him.

114 Referring to prophecy, Uricoechea in his introduction to
787 Celedón's Guajiro Grammar refutes — we do not know on what
authority — the statement of Ensign de la Rosa when the latter states that the Indians divine by means of tobacco, and says:

[28 cont.]

114 787 "Shamans still augur by the direction of smoke, not by smoking tobacco as de la Rosa tells us, but by lighting a small faggot of firewood, tinder, or cotton." (23) But neither the one nor the other is totally mistaken since, as we have already seen and will note again later, the two systems, divination by means of the firebrand or by tobacco, are actually employed in La Guajira.

*756 775 776 With respect to the relations between the shaman and his protector spirits in general, Métraux affirms: "The relations between the shaman and his familiar spirit have been fully analyzed by Barrere: 'Every piaye claims to have a genie, or rather a familiar demon, with which he has a close relationship, and by its intervention he carries out his wishes. This supposed genie is not always so submissive that it does not sometimes get away when it thinks it opportune, escaping to accomplish all the evil it can against the Indians, after which it will return to its abode. The main use of this genie is to assist the piayes either to chase out demons or to carry out some revenge, according to their will, and to kill whatever Indians they see fit, as their power extends equally to heal illnesses or to bring them on those on whom they wish to take revenge.'" (24) [Cited in French.]

*756 Taboos of the shamans. Shamans are obliged to observe most strictly a series of taboos, related chiefly to sex, to nutrition in general, and to objects they receive in payment for curing sick persons or animals. We shall describe each one of these separately.

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[113] 23. Celedón, Rafael. Gramática, Catecismo i Vocabulario de la lengua guajira. Introduccion. [Grammar, Catechism, and Vocabulary of the Guajiro Language. Introduction], p. 25.

24. Métraux. Op. cit., I, 212.

[28 cont.]

K756 Referring to the sexual aspect, we have the following
834 facts: 1) a woman of licentious habits can never get to exercise
833 the office of shaman; the spirit would never take up residence within her; 2) the unmarried woman who is initiated into the profession may have sexual relations only when she marries in accordance with established rites, but with certain limitations. [29] She may cohabit with her husband, and exclusively with him, in spite of the phrases used by the spirit at the time of initiation, "You may not sleep (cohabit) with your husband," but she must carry out the sexual act quickly and get up from the matrimonial hammock as soon as it is finished; for if not, they will see in the doorway of their habitation a shadow, in appearance like a civilizado, who will speak into her ear saying: "I do not like your sleeping with your husband because you do not belong to him. You are mine, you are my loved one." The woman therefore must perform coitus as hurriedly as if she were committing a crime.

K756 When a woman shaman marries, her spirit advises her as
842 follows: "So that you may not have children, since you are always with your husband in spite of my prohibition, put skeins of wool on your wrists and on your ankles and around your waist like a sirapo [loincloth], and tie a piece of onion to the wool." The Indian woman who related this said that she had obeyed the spirit's instructions in every detail, and she had never had any more children. The spirit demanded a gold necklace from her as recompense for its counsel.

K756 Another female shaman with whom we had the opportunity
834 to converse recounted the following to us: When she married,
776 the spirit told her that it cared for her no longer. When she in-
787 quired the cause of this, the spirit replied that it was due to the fact that after having been with her husband, she had a smell of male goat, an odor which it did not like. The shaman explained to the spirit that she had married because her parents had sold her. The spirit was quite angered with her and had no wish to return to inspire her; it did not want her to marry because she belonged to it and not to anyone else. Finally it agreed to the formula that she might cohabit with her husband but must not linger over the sexual act.

[29 cont.]

*756 When the woman becomes pregnant, the spirit puts up with
the situation without getting angry, but it does not show any such
833 patience if she delays a length of time in the sexual act with her
834 husband, or if she sleeps by his side throughout the night.

The female shaman's obligation, in the sexual aspect, goes to the length of forcing her to be but a passive entity during coitus, not permitting her body the slightest motion and also not permitting any endearments from her husband before the sexual
[787] act. When these dispositions are disobeyed, the shaman finds
herself suffering during the night from especially terrifying and
horrible dreams which fill her with fears and anxieties.

*756 The man who marries a shaman gets to understand his
wife's situation, and for this reason he is prudent in his actions:
693 He does not demand anything but the strictly indispensable, and
he is in accord with her in all matters related to her special
state. [30]

*756 But in spite of all these prohibitions, the female shaman
776 who becomes pregnant receives aid from the spirit at the time
844 of giving birth. This assistance consists of an easy delivery of
her baby and of counsel her spirit gives her on the simplest form
of giving birth, the remedies she should take, etc.

*756 The shaman must not perform ceremonial acts of curing
when she is in her menstrual period because the patient will be-
841 come worse instead of improving. However, pregnancy does
843 not present any obstacle to her activities, and she may accom-
plish cures during the entire period of gestation.

*756 In the case of a male shaman, the spirit permits him to be
834 with his wife, but for a very short time; he is also allowed, as
[595] are the rest of the Guajiro, to have several wives.

In summary, women shamans must cohabit exclusively with their husbands, avoiding all endearments, movements, the prolongation of coitus, and pregnancy. They may not exercise their functions during their menstrual periods. The male shaman also must be moderate in the sexual aspect and limit himself to his wife, or wives, as the case may be.

*756 The food taboo is limited to prohibiting the shaman from
262 eating the flesh of such animals as he has received in payment

[*30 cont.*]

*756 for his services as a curer; the flesh of animals sacrificed during
262 anyone's wake or during the ceremony of the second burial, espe-
cially if it is the remains of a shaman which are to be exhumed;
ordinary food during the days on which he is carrying out his pro-
fession when he should limit himself to a small portion of corn
mazamorro [cooked crushed corn] and water. Hence, the cattle
[422] he receives at his spirit's request in exchange for his cures are
used in an indirect manner, being kept for breeding purposes.

171 We also find that the food taboo among shamans is charac-
teristic among the Cashinawa Indians, according to the text
260 published by Capistrano de Abreu and cited by Métraux. Accord-
*756 ing to them the souls (spirits) say to the initiate: "I have innocu-
lated you with the magic substance. Do not, therefore, eat
carelessly any sort of nourishment or you will lose your magic
power (*feitiço*). Eat sparingly. Drink soup, eat cooked bananas
and fish. Eat nothing but that!"

They say: "When you do not eat [*sic*]. Do not eat the tapir, do not eat the deer, do not eat the peccary, do not eat jaguar, do not eat *nambú*, do not eat the *jacau*, do not eat the *cujubin*, do not eat the coati, do not eat the *guariba*, do not eat the monkey. These are the foods that you may not eat. If you do eat them [*31*] we will kill you, say the spirits. Among vegetables do not eat sweet potatoes, sweet manioc, or the *innames*." (25) [Cited in French.]

25. Métraux. *Op. cit.*, I, 204.

*756 So far as the other objects that the shaman receives as pay-
422 ment for his work, neither may he use these directly. He simply
keeps them, or he gives them to his children [*hijos*] as he does
[423] with the cattle. These objects, if they are not handed over
while he is alive, will be divided up after his death among his
heirs in accordance with Guajiro customary law....

*756 *Death of a shaman*. When a shaman becomes ill he has to
765 call in a colleague to practice on him all the ceremonies and
rites indispensable for fending off the illness, since curers have
the power to cure others but are not able to cure themselves.

[31 cont.]

753 755 *756 776 If the shaman's illness and the announcement of his death are provoked by the displeasure of his protector spirit, there generally is no possibility of calling in another shaman to carry out the ceremonies of curing. The illness of the shaman more than being his alone is an illness of the protector spirit; it is thus different from all other illnesses known to the natives. The shaman himself cannot help; he does not know how to apply the remedies he may have used in similar cases. He only, and this on few occasions, applies hot water to his chest. At other times the spirit may have pity on him and may come and recommend some special remedy to him, indicating at the same time where he can obtain it. The sick shaman then takes the remedy, and his sickness is immediately alleviated.

*756 766 On the death of a shaman it is obligatory to hold a wake for at least three consecutive days, because the attacks which shamans have ("states of ecstasy") are so frequent and on occasion prolonged for a considerable time, that there is the possibility that he may not be really dead. The natives, then, do not wish to give a shaman burial until they are convinced of his death. There is also the belief that when such persons die they do not follow the same cycle as other mortals, since their bodies do not become hard and stiff but remain soft and lax, as if they were only sleeping. At the conclusion of these three obligatory days of the wake, they carry him away for burial. They wash the body and fasten his shroud as they do for others. But his crown, his maraca, and all his clothes are first broken and torn and later buried in a special place in the woods, or are thrown away in a lonely place. They must not place these objects with him in his grave [32] because the spirit of the dead shaman would return, very angry with the persons who had done such a thing, and would punish their disrespect in some form or another.

*756 775 -787 The dead shaman's spirit wanders everywhere like all other spirits, it goes to the place where his body lived, to places well known to it, but it is always accompanied by its protector spirit, from which it will never become separated. Both the protector spirit and its protege may descend on a new shaman in order to assist him. This is probably the explanation of the possession of

[32 cont.]
*756 various spirits by one person. They are several spirits associated
775 by this post-mortem relationship which act inseparably in their
787 function as counselors.

It is also very probable that the protector spirits invoked by the shamans may not be anything other than the spirits of famous deceased shamans of times past to whom they turn for aid. In this case they would only have to make a change of name due to the taboo relating to the use of the name of dead persons, which we shall explain in the corresponding chapter.

• • •

114 Before continuing with our subject, we wish to make cer-
171 tain clarifying statements with respect to the presence of women
562 in the science of magic in La Guajira and in general among
*756 primitive Americans. We have already seen that among the
Guajiro Indians the only basic condition required to become a shaman is what we have called the "revelation," accompanied by the symptoms described earlier. The sex, age, or economic and social position of the person is not taken into account in any way. It is, as we have stated, only necessary to be of a hysterical nature. However, Métraux in his work which we have repeatedly quoted states:

"In tropical South America the profession of shaman appears to be as a general rule reserved for the masculine sex. One does find, however, among many writers reference to women shamans." (26) [Cited in French.] According to these authors quoted by Métraux, (Rochefort, Roth, Koch, Grünberg, and Ives d'Evreux), women shamans are to be found in the Antilles and among the Tupinamba, Taulipang, Arekuna [Arekena], and Macushi [Macusi].

With reference especially to women shamans in La Guajira, Métraux maintains the following, based on Petrullo's The Yaruros of the Capanaparo River: "Among the Arawak tribe of the Guajiro

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26. Métraux. Op. cit., I, 198.

[32 cont.]
114 the number of women shamans is greater than that of the men
171 piai. At the suggestion of these latter, women will enter the
562 profession following a call from the spirit world and [33] are
*756 initiated into the secrets of their art by an experienced shaman
who at night teaches them to handle the rattle and sing their magic songs." (27) [Cited in French.] He likewise quotes cases of women shamans among the ancient Mojo Indians of eastern Bolivia and the Itonama, neighbors of those previously mentioned (28), as well as among the Apapocuva (Guaraní), the Cobeuo, the Palikur, and the Carajá (29).

Further on, speaking of the role of women in witchcraft, he says: "With the exception of the passage in Ives d'Evreux..." (relative to the Tupinamba) "there does not exist any description of a shamanistic seance of the current type being directed by a *female piai. This hiatus is perhaps due to the poverty of our* sources, but it is also revelatory of the real position of women in shamanism. The profession is open to them, but the role they play in it is modest. It appears they limit themselves to simple and easy cures, to various remedies, and to the recital of charms. Women do not usually take part in the invocation of spectacular spirits before the extraction of pathogenic substances. It is certainly not through the effect of simple coincidence that women shamans appear especially in the cultures that have come strongly under European influence (Guajiro, Yaruro, Palikur, Warrau, Itonama, and Guaraní, etc." (30) [Cited in French.]

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27. Métraux. Op. cit., I, 199.

28. Métraux. Op. cit., I, 199.

29. Métraux. Op. cit., I, 200.

30. Métraux. Op. cit., I, 200.

[33 cont.]

114 We do not wish to question Professor Métraux's statement
177 about the influence of White contact in relation to medicine-women
562 in the other groups cited by him, as we are not objectively
*756 acquainted with them. But with regard to the Guajiro, we have to make the clarification that in the descriptions collected by us in the field, it is precisely the woman who really initiates magic, or better said shamanism, among the Indians, when she obliges her nephew to follow her own career. This aspect can be better understood when the reader comes to the section of this chapter entitled "The shaman in oral literature."
[174] The fact that women appear as shamans in oral literature demonstrates the antiquity of the institution, as this literature faithfully preserves the most remote traditions of the group.

*756 The shaman, man of two worlds. All that we have seen in connection with the life cycle of the Guajiro shaman makes us think that he is what we have called him in the subtitle that heads these paragraphs: a man of two worlds — the world of the living and the world of the spirits of the dead. [34]

*756 The communication which he establishes after all the
554 preparatory ceremonies with one or several protector spirits who lavish on him every kind of counsel and instruction and even protect him against evil in all its manifestations: illness, enemies, public calamities, etc., make of him a man distinct from all the rest. His status is superior to that of other mortals because in his hands he has power over both good and evil. It is this duality that binds with his science a man who is both sacred and human, a being respected by all but feared at the same time, a good man, able to cure illnesses, but also a malignant being, liable to let loose the fury of the spirits beyond the grave. He is respected, loved, feared, and even, we might dare to say, profoundly hated.

[783] What predominates in him above all is the characteristic of impurity due to contamination from death. Sacred and impure become confounded in him; he is sacred because he is untouchable, and he is untouchable because of his participation with death through his protector spirits.

*756 His dual position as inhabitant of two worlds, involuntary it is true, depends on two fundamentally simple facts: first, his

[34 cont.]

*756 being a mortal, a man who came into the world like any other; second, his having been designated by the spirits of the dead, and especially by those of other dead shamans, as we have seen in one of the previous sections. We have said that his position is involuntary, because neither of his two natures as a human being or as a shaman has been chosen by him nor can he renounce them. The first requires no explanation, it would be paradoxical. The second we have already seen: the spirit, once having chosen the person in whom he is going to lodge, causes him to overcome — according to Guajiro belief — the first attacks (apparent death), an evident sign of his future function in society. The words of this protector from the other world to the future shaman tell us with complete clarity how impossible it is to renounce this vocation and, for the same reason, how involuntary his position is. "Eat manilla, because if you do not, you will die." It is an imperative, not a suggestion nor a call to the vocation. It is, from that moment, the neat expression of the absolute domination the individual must submit himself to in order to exercise the function of curer magician of his group, a domination that does not cease for a moment and which only disappears at his death, when his spirit, allied to that of the protector, decides to take possession of another person in order to subject that person to its will. [35]

Now we can understand better the role of manilla in acts of magic. "If you do not eat manilla you will be a dead man." The manilla is, in a way, a symbol of the shaman; it is what puts him in contact with the spirits. Without it he will not become a true curer. And without eating it, neither will he himself return to life. The apparent death which the attack which we call a hysterical fit represents will be converted into real death if he does not obey the spirit's order to eat manilla; that is, the individual will not be resuscitated. This also supports the thesis we have been expounding that the shaman is a man of two worlds, since he has really been in the world of spirits during his attack, or revelation.

*756
775 The shaman acts neither by himself nor for himself. All his activities and the performance of his functions are determined by and through the spirits which have deigned to dispense

[35 cont.]
*756 their protection to him. When he is performing the ceremonial
775 indispensable for freeing the body and soul of a patient from the
clutches of the *wanurú*, he represents nothing but the role of
intermediary between two worlds and especially between two
classes of spirits – that of his protector who wishes to save the
sick person and that of others now dead who desire above all
[753] that the evil they have caused the person of the sick man should
continue until it ends with his death, so that in this way they
can avenge an offense received or simply satisfy some capricious
wish of their own, as beings capable – because of their position
as inhabitants of another world, a position superior to everything
we can imagine in this mortal universe – of doing any harm
they wish.

755 This position of intermediary is clearly shown in the cere-
*756 mony of curing. The communication must be made through
definite material objects which take on in their turn the charac-
ter of untouchables: the maraca, the crown, the tassels which
contain a representation of goat dung, and the tobacco or
manilla, objects which cannot be used by others but only by
shamans during their moments of trance or invocation; the
solitude to which the curer submits himself during his invoca-
tions, with only his patient present, for fear that the protector
spirit might disappear and refuse to give aid in the cure which the
shaman is trying to effect; his protector spirit's demands for
certain objects to satisfy the voracity of harmful spirits or its
own, demands which must be complied with to the letter; the
ritual chants which relate the different moments of agreement
between the harmful spirits and that of the shaman; the sacrifice
of an animal determined by the spirit – male goat, sheep, etc. –
as recompense for the spirit's favors; and lastly, the expressed
prohibition that rests on the shaman not to eat or use the [36]
animals or objects that he receives in payment for his cures. All
these are facts which clearly indicate that the shaman is no more
than an intermediary or an earthly representative of the spirits of
good, or even of evil, and above all of the dead shamans who
wish to continue exerting their beneficial influence on the group
to which they belonged in life.

771 This function of communication with the spirits, annexed
*756 to, and inseparable from, the personality of the medicine man,
787

[36 cont.]

171 *756 787 is universal. It is, so to speak, the ultimate end of his mission in the community. Professor Pinto reaffirms it when, speaking of the Tupinambá pagé, he writes as follows. "Another of the functions or callings of the pagé was to communicate with the spirits or with the devil.... Frequently, as Nóbrega gives us to understand, by means of the maraca ...." And further on: "Naturally, the power to communicate with the spirits raised the pagé to the category of xamá. The xamá in Herbert König's exact definition is characterized by his faculty of speaking with the spirits, especially, in his moments of trance or ecstasy. Or, as Robert H. Lowie explains, the xamá is a kind of "medium" who possesses the gift of relating himself with the supernatural and serving as its interpreter." (31) [Cited in French.]

[113]

31. Pinto Recife, Esteban. La extraña figura del Pagé Tupinambá [The Strange Figure of the Tupinambá Pagé], pp. 323-324.

171 *756 Our contention regarding the involuntary nature of the profession of shaman, and by the same token its irrenouncibility, is sustained by this report which Métraux has taken from Nimuendajú with reference to the Bororó: "The Bororó who is called upon to become a bari (medicine man) receives a mysterious order to deliver himself up in the bush, where the spirit will manifest itself to him in the form of a monkey or a water hog and will demand his submission. As a sign of acquiescence, he will give up his bow and arrows. His head will whirl; a thousand colors will dance before his eyes; he has become a bari." (32) [Cited in French.]

32. Métraux. Op. cit., I, 203. Italics are ours.

*756 828 Apart from this domination to which the spirits subject the shaman, converting him into a creature at the service of their wishes, there is another factor, perhaps more important in its external form than the previous ones and one that makes us think more of the double life of the shaman: This is his frequent attacks,

[36 cont.]

*756 attacks which are considered as an apparent death, a separation
828 of the soul from the body of the shaman in order that he may obtain a better communication with the spirit. These attacks take place frequently in the ordinary life of the shaman and appear especially when he is interrupted in his state of ecstasy or of illumination, in his moments of spiritual conversation, and suggest, in a certain way, an elation, a way of escaping from the [37] earthly life to inhabit for a few moments the world of the dead, which is his real world to which he belongs through the express decision of his protector spirits.

773 *The shaman in oral literature:* Our colleague Licentiate
539 Chaves collected in La Guajira a series of stories which were published in the *Boletín de Arqueología*, one of which refers to the shaman Umaralá. This story tells us that in "former times there were bad shamans who collected much and did not cure." (33) The one who changed this situation was Umaralá, making use of certain secrets for cures, accompanied by chants and shaking of the maraca. He was initiated into the magic arts by his aunt, who was a good shaman. His initiation coincided precisely with a relapse from an illness which he had contracted during a period of pestilence in La Guajira. The symptoms described in the story are the following: "He lost his power of speech, suffered continuous attacks, lost consciousness." His aunt dedicated herself to his care, and he "heard the arguments that his aunt sustained in her chants with the spirit of the dead, who was none other than Jirairai, who however criticized all the old shaman's chants. He clearly heard the spirit say: "Either you die or your son dies." (34) The shaman invoked the help of a new spirit, but in the end she died in order to save her nephew.

The latter, together with his bond servant, buried his aunt and complied with all the ceremonies pertaining to the dead,

33. Chaves. *Op. cit.*, 321.

34. Chaves. *Op. cit.*, 321-322.

[37 cont.]

773 539 until one night when he was weeping for his dead aunt, she appeared to him and said: "Go, my son, to the region of Jarara, take my cape and my maraca, visit the sick, and "shamanize" them, and only thus will you find the true path. But first you must change your name ... to that of Umaralí." (We see here another sign of apparent death, the change of name.) "The vision disappeared, and Umaralí felt obliged to obey what he had heard. He visited the sick, "shamanized" them, and drove away their sicknesses, and his fame as a great doctor ran throughout all La Guajira." (35)

35. Chaves. Op. cit., 322.

The story goes on to tell the amazing cures accomplished by Umaralí and in general the story of his life as a shaman until the moment of his death.

*756 538 What interests us in this story is simply the proof in the oral legendary literature of La Guajira of what we have been expounding throughout this chapter, that is, the symptomatology of the vocation of shaman represented by special sicknesses — usually of a hysterical [38] type — in which are involved the *loss of speech and consciousness; delirium, possibly feverish,* accompanied by visions and attacks; the initiation by an old shaman familiar with the tasks of curing; the presence of a protector spirit who has complete mastery over the pupil and dominates his will completely; the presence likewise of the magic objects of the shaman; the maraca and certain items of dress, etc.; the total lack of free will on the part of the individual about becoming a shaman, a profession which makes him strictly subject to the wishes of the spirits whom he must obey blindly. We have only to remember the words of his aunt to Umaralí and especially the words of the story, "Umaralí felt obliged to obey what he had heard ..."; the fact that the protector spirit is generally that of a dead shaman who continues to exercise his functions, his true functions of curing, through an intermediary: the living shaman. In other words, the shaman is really converted into a benefactor, or better still into a true

[38 cont.]

538 medicine man, after his death, and it is only then that he can
*756 himself exercise his profession by himself, having at his service
a terrestial intermediary, to whom he communicates by various
means his methods of curing, events of the future, etc. This
equally confirms our thesis, fully expounded previously, that the
shaman is a man of two worlds: the world of the living and the
world inhabited by the spirits of the dead. Lastly, it reaffirms
what we have said in reply to Métraux's statement, that the
feminine institution of shamanism in La Guajira is not due to the
influence of European culture (which is only now beginning to be
strongly felt) but is as ancient as their oral literature.

174 Present position of the shaman. If we consider socio-
565 economic conditions in La Guajira in the Pre-conquest epoch,
which placed the natives in a position of a people engaged essentially in hunting and in fishing on the coasts (36), we have to accept as a fact a virtual equality between the different clans which composed the community. The superiority of one or various clans over the rest was possibly due to their greater aptitudes for war or the greater number of fighting men they had at their command. Riches would be represented by valuable adornments, necklaces of gold or of tuma, pearls, etc. [39]

In such a state of affairs under the primitiveness which we
174 can presume existed in the Guajiro community of that time, the
554 shaman must have occupied the first place in the social hierarchy.
*756 His undiminished supernatural powers, his position as intermedi-
ary between the community and the world of the dead, the fears
which his powers provoked were all sufficient reasons for him to
be respected and feared above all and by all.

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36. Restrepo Tirado says: "The Guajiro and Cocina [Kusina] Indians occupy La Guajira Peninsula. They were nomads and lived by hunting and fishing in improvised encampments, which they moved from one site to another." (Historia de la Provincia de Santa Marta [History of the Province of Santa Marta], 1st, I, 15.)

[39 cont.]

105 175 177 But the Conquest came. The Guajiro Indian kept his independence by means of wars and raids and maintained his personality intact as far as possible. His internal organization endured and continued manifesting itself without changes for a time; family organization, bond service, slavery, interclan wars, the laws of inheritance and compensation payment, all the social structure, including marriage, continued in the traditional forms. However, the theft of livestock from the neighboring Spanish ranches began, and the Guajiro Indians learned to master the art of stock grazing until they became converted into a group of herders with occasional agriculture, hunting, and fishing.

The situation was thus undergoing a change apparently gentle in the form it took, but violent in the results it produced on marriage, inheritance, the status of the clan as a collectivity and of the individual in particular, which we attribute to the cause just noted and also to the acculturation provoked by the ever increasing number of civilizado elements in the peninsula: missionaries, military men, employees, traders, and adventurers, who have managed to introduce, as we have said in the introduction, a number of customs from their places of origin, still small [in number] but which slowly are beginning to undermine the social organization of the natives.

177 +756 [747] All this has clashed with the strongest institution of primitive La Guajira, the shaman, who has had to withstand the challenge of the missionaries, who inculcate in the Indians' minds Catholic beliefs or Christian beliefs in general, absolutely opposed to the primary animism and the magic laws which determined, and still determine, in part the acts, lives, and deaths in general of all and each one of the members of the Guajiro community.

The new concept of wealth based on stock grazing, the presence of civilizado elements, the network of communications that now crosses the peninsula, the decisive action of the missionaries and schools have all combined to reduce the shaman to his minimum proportions. Of course, there still remain elements in the native which allow one to classify him as framed by a magic mentality, but external influences are carrying him

[39 cont.]
177 in the direction of civilization, which [40] powerfully attracts
*756 him. We can almost affirm that if the medical and hygienic services of La Guajira were intensified by the Colombian government, in the course of a few years the shaman would disappear as an institution in the peninsula, and the greater part of the aborigines' magic beliefs, especially with respect to sickness and death, would disappear from the collectivity and would remain only as folkloristic manifestations which recall his presence in times past.

The decadence of this institution can be noted very easily
*756 if we look at what Uricoechea says in the introduction to the
558 work already cited: "They always had their shamans, or curers,
177 and diviners to consult and respect. The shamans had their schools in the woods, and they were legislators in addition to being doctors; furthermore, they were the priests and interpreters of observances and beliefs which they, in common with all the inhabitants of America, had." (37) Compare what is said in these paragraphs with all that we have stated, and you will note the enormous decrease in prestige that the shaman has suffered in La Guajira in the space of a few lustrums.

37. Celedón, Rafael. *Op. cit.*, Introduction, p. 20.

[41]

III

Magic and Sacrifice

782 In Guajiro culture we can distinguish four types of sacrifices:

1. Those of a funeral ritual character.
2. Those of a harmful warlike character.
3. Those made to forestall the effects of dreams.
4. Those made to propitiate the protector spirit of the shamans.

[41 cont.]

764 1. The first of these types refers to the custom established
782 among them of sacrificing, during the wake of any member of
the community, a number of animals belonging to the dead man
(cows, bulls, goats, sheep), the meat of which is divided among
those attending the wake along with the corresponding drink,
which in these days is rum but in times past was chicha.

The reason given for the sacrificing of animals during a
[767] wake in answer to the question is that this is done in deference to
the guests and especially to those whom we could call "profes-
sional mourners," who spend all day and all night moaning over
the corpse. But on observing certain practices and particularly
certain taboos regarding the meat of these sacrificed animals,
one has to think rather of the ritual character of the sacrifice.

It is a fact that the relatives — sons, daughters, nephews
262 [and nieces, sabrinos], brothers [and sisters, hermanos] etc. —
764 of the deceased cannot eat the meat of animals sacrificed during
783 the wake or during the later ceremony of secondary burial, as this,
782 according to their belief, would be equivalent to eating their
dead kinsman's flesh. This taboo, imposed on the deceased's
relatives, serves to prove to us — so far as it is possible to de-
duce — the ritual aspect of the sacrifice of the dead man's
livestock, stock which on being slaughtered takes on the same
untouchable or magical quality, which the individual takes
on when he disappears from the world of the living and enters
the universe of the dead. [42] To put this more plainly, the
animals sacrificed are contaminated by their dead owner.

The untouchable quality of the animal sacrificed at the
[765] wake or in the ceremony that accompanies the second burial
is supported by the following fact. The belief exists in La
[843 Guajira that if during pregnancy the mother or the father of the
753] future child is present at the exhuming of a corpse, the child
is born sickly, suffers from permanent diarrhea and night sweats,
755 and gets more and more pale and progressively thinner. Its
765 illness continues to get worse, and none of the familiar remedies
have the desired effect. The parents then resort to the following system of curing (a system which with some variations is
also common among the people of the town of Santander).
They wait until there is an exhumation ceremony, and then

[42 cont.]

755 765 they put the child inside one of the animals sacrificed for the occasion, taking care that the body of the animal is still warm, with the object that the child enter in the warmth.

If they cannot take the sick child to the place where the ritual ceremony is to be performed, the parents take a bone of the sacrificed animal, let it dry, and later cook it in a large quantity of water, with which they subsequently bathe the body of the child. The successful effect should be attained at the first bath or after several successive ones.

755 There is another system of curing this sickness, which the Guajiro call "the chill of the tomb." The presence of the parents at the wake has infected the unborn child with the coldness of the tomb which the dead man is about to occupy. For this reason, the important thing is to drive out the cold, for which they resort to the substitute (when there is no possibility of an exhumation ceremony in the near future) of digging a hole in the earth, approximately the size of the child, placing him in it and then covering him up to the neck with the displaced earth.

755 764 978 In any case, as can be seen, the second method is no *more than a substitute for the required and definitive remedy.* In the first case there are two magic associations: the participation, passive and involuntary, of the dead man in the transmission of the sickness; and the other, more active, of the cure through the sacrificed animal, which, as we noted, participates in the taboo by virtue of the sacrifice. If it were simply a matter of the cold-hot association, that is, if the idea were to drive the cold out of the sick child's body, the most practical and rapid way would be the third, that is, to put the child's body in an excavated hole and cover it with the displaced earth, so that heating by the sun may bring about the desired effect, particularly if one takes into account the high temperatures that are reached during [43] the day in the semidesert of La Guajira. But there is something more; there is the magic character of the ceremony of the sacrifice — which is undoubtedly diminishing through the effects of acculturation — but of which there remains at least the idea of utilizing the magic power of the sacrificed animal, or part

[43 cont.]

755 of the same — the bone which is left to dry and then cooked —
764 which also participates in its power, because in the primitive
778 mentality the part is accepted as the whole, or at least shares in
the power of the whole, even at a distance.

556 Another meaning that the sacrifice of animals has is that
related to the status of the individual in his other life. One of
436 the points of reference of status in La Guajira is wealth, which
437 is nearly always equivalent to the possession of a larger or lesser number of heads of livestock. Livestock represents, in certain aspects, Guajiro currency, since interchanges, blood payments, etc., are always based on a definite number of heads of livestock, besides of course necklaces of tuma, gold, etc.

556 Naturally, if an individual occupies a certain social position in life, it is logical that when he goes to the other life, to
764 the world of the dead, he occupies an identical position or tries
775 to better the one he had in life. This, then, is one of the reasons why certain of his possessions are placed near or in his tomb, and to complete his "equipment" for the next world, a number of animals are sacrificed, the higher his position in society the greater the number, so that these may give him the desired *social position in the world of the spirits.*

764 The association, then, is easy to establish: If the individual in dying passes to a new life similar to the one he led on
775 earth, then the animal, a living being with a soul like the man,
825 on dying must also pass on to occupy a place in the other world. This, of course, is only our own supposition. But we find no other explanation of the Guajiro statement that the animals should be sacrificed so that they can accompany their owner to the other world and give him an advantageous position among the other spirits.

764 The sacrifice implies above all an act of magic. The fact
784 that the dead man's close relatives must not eat the meat of the
778 sacrificed animals, because it would be like eating the flesh of their relative himself, establishes the relation between the owner and his property in the sense that the latter shares his personality. And as the dead man is sacred, or at least taboo, that is, sacred in the sense of being untouchable, so also are the things that he owned; the animals — which are [44] to accompany

[44 cont.]

764 789 778 him on his journey and which remain his only possessions, since the rest will be distributed among his heirs — take on the quality of untouchables.

782 789 2. The poisoned arrow. The second sacrifice about which we gathered information has a greater importance than the previous one for two reasons: first, because it is the sacrifice of a human being, and second, because it is linked to a series of ceremonies set in motion to obtain a certain end, the deadly power of the imára, or poisoned arrow, or better said, the magic arrow.

[illegible] This sacrifice, so far as we could observe, is no longer practiced in La Guajira. According to the information gathered, it was practiced exclusively by the Kusina Indians, inhabitants of the sierra of that name. They were bellicose Indians, warriors, robbers, and animal stealers, who kept the other communities of the peninsula in an incessant state of tension by their attacks and evil-doings. We think it interesting to point out here that these Indians, commonly known as Cocina, according to all the information obtained did not constitute in themselves a separate cultural group. Their language was the same as that of the other Guajiro; their customs were relatively the same, and their physical type identical. Everything seems to indicate that they were no more than social outcasts, all those who, for crimes committed and not paid for in accordance with established laws, had found it necessary to unite themselves into societies outside the law. The question is not entirely clear, and it will be difficult to make it so because Kúsina Indians are no longer found in La Guajira.

411 Bows and arrows stood out among the arms used by the Guajiro, (We say "stood" out because now they chiefly use rifles of foreign make). One of these arrows, which they call poisoned, bears the name of imára. The shaft of this arrow is made of a thin piece of wood taken from the tree called parúa and measures approximately 80 centimeters in length. At the upper end of this sharpened shaft is placed poison of a ray or the bone of a poisonous serpent. This imára is what the Kusina Indians used as a last resort in their battles with Whites or with

[illegible]

[44 cont.]
411 some of the Guajiro communities during their pillaging expedi-
648 tions.

724 The value of the arrow, considered to be infallible,
411 stemmed from the extremely important fact that its tip was
anointed with the blood of a sacrificed child. The arrow took
778 into itself, by magic contamination, the sacred and impure
782 quality of the sacrificial ceremony performed on the child,
[45] a quality of extreme value when one realizes that the
child's own father performed the sacrifice.

The process is as follows: The Kusina, according to the
782 story of our informant, an Indian woman from the Sierra de Jarara
who had heard from her parents a great deal about the customs
of these Indians, with whom the people of the Sierra had had
dealings, were accustomed to take a male child from their own
family. They carried him off to some distant hills situated in
the interior of the Cocina sierra. They took him up a particular
mountain, and on its summit under a pó (a special tree) they
killed him. He was killed in this way: They blocked up his
nostrils and squeezed his throat with their hands, that is, they
strangled him, and with a pointed stone they struck his forehead
several times continuously until blood flowed from it. This
blood, which was exactly what they wished to obtain in the
sacrifice, was not allowed to spill, but was gathered very care-
fully in a very clean utensil. In recent times the blood was col-
lected in an empty tin such as those used for sardines or salmon,
but it is to be supposed that in olden times a special ceramic
container was used. Once the blood had been collected, they
put it to boil in the same utensil in which it had been collected.
Next they put it in another that in modern times was a glass con-
tainer, although in former times it must have been of some other
material, in order to preserve it. This utensil which contained
the boiled blood of the boy was kept in the woods among stones
[563] which they collected for this purpose. The executioner, who was
none other than the boy's father, had prepared beforehand a
[278] quantity of arrows tipped with the poison of a ray, which he later
[433] anointed with the blood and distributed among the rest of the
Kusina natives or the Guajiro in general, in exchange for live-
stock. The price that had to be paid for one of these arrows was

[45 cont.]
782 quite high, which also gives us an idea of their value in the
opinion of the Indians since they considered that the fact of
their points being impregnated with the blood of the sacrificed
child made them both more poisonous and more accurate.

766 The body of the boy, who had to be between four and six
years old, was brought by the father to the hamlet after these
magic operations were finished and was buried in the clan cemetery.
The burial and the death of the child were secrets. Nobody
must know about it. We could not discover if the secret
[682 nature of the ceremony was due to the fact that the community
might punish the murderer, the mother or maternal aunt, or
788] some member of the child's family on the maternal side, collecting
the corresponding sum for his death in accord [46] with
customary Guajiro law, or if the reason was that secrecy
strengthened the malevolent qualities of the poison on the arrows.
It is to be presumed that the latter hypothesis is the more
acceptable, since the disappearance of the child and the sale of
magic arrows by the father would point him out as the author
of the sacrifice.

682 In any case we cannot overlook the aspects of blood in
683 the child sacrifice just mentioned. Spilling blood is one of the
826 crimes most severely punished. Blood, according to everything
one can deduce, has great value for the natives, as it is considered
an integral part of their human personality, even to
confounding it, so to speak, with personality itself, as they do
in the case of names. Hence, for the same reason, he who
voluntarily or involuntarily sheds the blood of another person
is stigmatized and becomes an outcast from society. He becomes
unclean, and in consequence has to make the corresponding
reparation which at the present time is complied with
by paying to the offended party or to his family a determined
[411] quantity of valuable objects or animals. For this same reason,
arrows contaminated with the blood of the child sacrificed by
his father have, or ought to have, according to the Guajiro
411 mentality, an incalculable value due to their participation in
935 the sacrifice and spilling of blood, thanks to its presence on
775 their points. Moreover, if we take into account what the
dead man means to the *Guajiro* as a spirit capable of doing harm

[46 cont.]

411 when the respect due to his status is not shown (Cf. "Magic
755 and Funerals"), and particularly the spirit of those dead through
775 violence, we can better understand the high value they place on
the imára, or magic arrow.

593 It will be well to explain again the position of the father
611 in relation to his son in La Guajira. The family in this society
follows matrilineal descent, and therefore the father is not
really considered as father to his sons but is to his nephews, his
sister's sons. The family ties between father and son are so
weak that they do not exist except in certain secondary aspects
of the family economic organization.

411 The use of the poisoned arrow among the Kusina Indians
539 is shown by the following fragment of a story told by the same
989 woman informant who supplied us with the data on which this
present study is based and which refers to the struggle between
a Guajiro Indian named Kurára-páta and some Kusina Indians
who arrived at his hamlet one night to steal his stock. The
section dealing with the magic arrow, translated literally from
the *Guajiro text, is as follows:* [47] "The Kusina shot *(with a
rifle)* at Kurára-páta, who came upon them from behind. They
wounded him in the thigh. 'Now, it isn't possible to do anything,' said K.P. 'Let's kill him to end this once and for all,'
said the Kusina. K.P. lifted himself on to his sound knee.
He shot at them (with his rifle), killing one. Then the Kusina
said, 'Let's kill him with the imára (poisoned arrow).'"

411 The fragment of this story corroborates the existence of
989 the magic arrow among the Kusina, and also, as previously
stated, the fact that the poisoned arrow,— magic arrow to us —
was the last recourse utilized by these Indians when their other
weapons did not produce the desired result.

The area of distribution of this cultural element, as we
have seen, was in the Sierra de Cocinas, and it was frequently
used in Jarara, where it was obtained by purchase or by barter
from the makers. This class of weapon used to be employed
in this latter region — Jarara — in times of war. Now it is no
longer used in either of the two areas mentioned for two reasons.
[797 First, the evangelizing action of the Capuchin fathers in the
178] Sierra de Jarara, who have, in the main, mitigated the warlike

411 [47 cont.]
789 character of the inhabitants of Jarara; and second, the complete disappearance (according to all sources) of the Kusina Indians in
178 the last 20 to 25 years for various reasons. In other words, the
747 arrows which may still exist but of which we could not obtain a sample are those preserved by the aged Indians of Jarara, purchased from the makers in times past.

Sacrifice to forestall the effects of dreams. In the Guajiro
787 mentality dreams are considered to be revelations of the future, coming from a benign spirit who seeks in this way to show his protection to a certain person. When the shaman himself has the revealing dreams then these acquire greater importance, as we have already seen. For the same reason, when one of these
*756 shamans has a special dream, he informs the interested party
787 and adds to it the necessary instructions or special ceremonies
751 that he should arrange in order to counteract the prognostication. If such ceremonies are not carried out or are not totally complied with, the dream will become converted to reality. The Guajiro has immense faith in dreams, particularly in those of shamans, and very few persons will leave themselves open to suffer the consequences of the nonfulfillment of the rituals indicated, as experience, according to them, has [48] shown that noncompliance with the indications of the shamans has resulted in many deaths and disasters when the events foretold have taken place.

As the aspect of dreams is treated in a special section, we will here only refer to the theme which interests us and which is related to sacrifices. In this respect we quote the narrative of one of our informants.

This occurred in Jarara. A woman shaman dreamed that a member of the Pushaina family clan was threatened with a fatal tragedy: he would die by the hand of one of his own family group. The shaman immediately informed him of it and ordered him, in order to avert the danger, to organize a fiesta of horse racing and, above all, to sacrifice a
- 682 black male goat and to bathe himself in its blood. The Indian did not want to carry out the shaman's instructions, and within a short time he was killed by a member of his own group of inferior economic standing. The reprisals taken against the

[48 cont.]
682 murderer's family after the crime were extremely cruel, as was
to be expected given the Guajiro social organization. Their
homes were burned down, their sources of water supply demol-
[569] ished, three men and four women were killed, and their chil-
dren enslaved.

782 The interesting part of the subject we are now dealing with
751 lies in the sacrifice of animals. These apparently serve as
761 substitutes for the individuals whose sentence has been revealed
in a dream. They take their place and are sacrificed in their stead. As a death has taken place, the evil spirit which had enslaved the future criminal in order to carry out its determination to harm him is now mollified by this act of propitiation. Moreover, as the animal (the black male goat in this case) shares the qualities of its owner by reason of such ownership, a part of the personality of the person sentenced to be punished in the dream is also sacrificed. The individual thus suffers two processes, death in part through the sacrifice of the animal and participation in the sacrifice by bathing in its blood.

171 Possible vestiges of this native belief still persist in
761 Colombian folklore in some parts of the departments of Antioquia,
885 Boyacá, Nariño, and Santander. There the people hold the be-
558 lief that when a domestic animal dies, especially if it is an
animal that has been much loved by the people of the house, it is a sign that some member of the household had been about to die. The sentence of death which lay on that person, according to the explanation given in all cases, was transferred to the animal by a special concession from God, [49] thus avoiding a greater calamity to the family. In Nariño this belief, according to information from the Licentiate Chaves, appears in popular oral literature. There is in reality a story which tells of a recently married couple who felt or knew (we cannot say how) that they would die very shortly. To avoid this, the wife dedicated herself to breeding cuyes (curies) [conejillo de Indias, a mammal of the order of rodents], which one by one died off; then she hastened to breed chickens, which also successively died; she then devoted herself to dogs, which also died. With the successive deaths of the animals, they were able to elude their own fate and lived happily together for a long time, free

171 [49 cont.]
538 from the menace of death that had weighed on them, and later
761 they were able to raise their domestic animals with greater
825 success than up to then.

000 Propitiation of the shaman's protector spirit. The sacrifice
of animals as propitiation or thanksgiving offering to the spirit
or spirits that have taken over the protection of the shaman is
fully explained in the previous chapter, for which reason we abstain from making further reference to it.

782 Conclusions. We have the following facts regarding the
place of such sacrifices within Guajiro social organization:
174 (a) Sacrifice of animals, of two kinds: one of a ritual funeral
character and the other as a prevention of the fulfillment of
dreams. (b) Human sacrifice, which may now be considered to
have disappeared due to various circumstances which have already been described. (c) The first two exist at times in their
original form, and at other times as mere survivals disguised in
social rather than ritualistic forms, as happens for example in
the sacrifice of animals during the secondary burial or the wake
in the ceremony of the first burial. (d) But in any case the three
show a distinct magic nature. (e) With respect to the sacrifice
of animals we may suppose that in ancient times the animal
sacrificed must have been a wild one from the forest obtained
by hunting, as the Guajiro Indians, the same as all Colombian
Indians and American Indians in general, were completely without, or almost without, any domestic animals, which were acquired only after the Conquest when the colonizing Spaniards imported them from the [Iberian] Peninsula to set up their ranches;
(f) Based on this same socio-economic fact, we may presuppose
quite an appreciable change in the content and form of certain
types of ceremony, because the passing from one economy to
another, particularly when it is so radical as [50] that of the
782 Guajiro, who changed his character of nomad hunter to that of
herdsman and stock grazer, implies a very appreciable transformation in the general social organization. (g) In the sacrifice of children, and in that of animals in order to ward off
the evils foreseen in dreams, we have to admit the contaminating effect of spilled blood — a very important taboo in La
Guajira — which increases the malevolent effect of the magic

[50 cont.]

782 arrow in the first case and saves a person sentenced to death in a dream through the blood of a sacrificed animal in the second. (h) Furthermore, in the second case we find an apparent substitution of the personality of the individual, or better still, a partial sacrifice of the same on his handing over for sacrifice an animal owned by him. (i) In the sacrifice of animals of a ritual funerary character, we can distinguish the following effects obtained: First the propitiation of the dead man's spirit which, as
769 may be seen in the chapter corresponding to "Magic and Funerals," can be beneficial, neutral, or malicious. This depends on whether all the considerations due to his status are maintained or not, or if all or part of the taboos established in this respect in the course of the social life of the community are violated or not. Second, the confirmation of the belief of a life beyond the tomb as a reflection of the earthly life. The sacrifice, in the sense that the dead animal accompanies its owner into the next life and places him on the same social plane that he occupied in this one among his fellow spirits there, confirms such a belief in the almost material life beyond the grave. [51]

IV

Sickness and Medicine

771
813 If we take into account the essential characteristics of primitive mentality, we should remember that their world is
761 what we might call metaphysical, since the objects that surround them do not have a real existence as they do not look at them with a truly objective discernment but allow their imagination to be deceived by the strange things around them so that these become supernatural beings, all animated, not in the physical sense of movement but in their capacity to do good or evil, or to intervene in any manner whatever in the lives of men, of other beings, and of the cosmos in general. All that relates to the surroundings of primitive people: rocks, plants, animals, natural phenomena ... , are active beings in the best sense of the word, capable of intervention and worthy of the Indian's respect,

[51 cont.]

771 fear, or admiration. The primitive has not at this stage reached
813 the discernment necessary to establish the logical relation be-
181 tween phenomena and their real causes, but establishes a magic
relationship that in the majority of cases does not correspond
to any concrete or objective reality.

753 This manner of thinking and of feeling is especially reflected in the facts related to the individual himself and his organic reactions and, essentially, in the variations to which his organism is susceptible in the biological or pathological sense. To the primitive sicknesses are not ills caused by pathogenic germs (we say this in the general sense as there are some exceptions) or by internal or external disorders but are the result of the harmful actions of some being — animal, human, mineral, or vegetable — who is the sick man's potential enemy or one whom he has injured in some way or another, especially in violating the social ritual arrangements which at first were related almost exclusively to the totem and which then gradually evolved toward diverse forms of magic which lead him to a real investigatory curiosity.

This curiosity is not limited, as might be expected, to the simple act of knowing what phenomenon or what individual spirit might have caused the sickness, but sets out to understand the whole matter in order to put into [52] practice a method of cure — it does not matter of what kind — which will bring one back to the state of health, to normality, and remove him from contact with the dangerous world of the spirits.

753 For this reason, in the following pages we shall find our-
selves confronted with this phenomenon: if the causes of the sick-
755 ness are magic or, in more general terms, supernatural, the
*756 methods of curing applied must be of the same type. The world
of the spirits is considered to be superior to the normal world
of the living, because it is unknown or partially so. The struggle
then, face to face, of individual against spirit will be unequal
because the latter — the spirit — is aided by supernatural forces
with which the living are unacquainted. For this reason it is
indispensable that shamans should be called in — the inter-
mediaries between man and spirit, or that he employ, when

[52 cont.]

753 lacking this support, certain practices of a magic character 755 which place him — always respecting due proportions — on a *756 plane of equality with the spirit or at least give him the possibility of warding off its harmful effects from him or his fellows. In the methods of healing, as will be seen as we progress in this chapter, the individual makes use, either directly or indirectly through an intermediary — the medicine man in this case, of the benevolent powers of the instrument causing the sickness, or else those of another spirit — under whatsoever materialization — as strong or stronger than the original cause of the sickness, in order to banish the illness.

755 *756 The value of the Guajiro shaman, or medicine man, as a curer, as we were able to observe in Chapter II, lies in the superiority conceded to him through his constant communication with the world of the spirits, which places him, so to speak, on a plane of equality with them. Nevertheless, in the aspect of Guajiro medicine four different factors intervene, which we can define in general as follows:

1) Medicine practiced directly by the shaman through his communication with benevolent spirits.

2) Medicine by divination, dependent or independent of the shaman, which creates another social group, not so clearly defined: that of the diviner.

757 3) Medicine which might be called household, independent of the shaman and of the diviner, which is applied through pragmatic knowledge of the curative value of certain plants, or through the observation of particular customs related to taboo, which as we shall see later, are of a preventative type.

174 648 *756 4) Medicine practiced by foreigners. This last factor must have its origin in ethnographic history, and it appears to us quite difficult to clarify. It deals with the medical intervention of curers from the [53] Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, whom the Guajiro consult in certain cases. These inhabitants of the Sierra belong to native groups included by Professor Rivet in the large Chibcha linguistic family (38). Our supposition of contacts between

38. Rivet, Paul. Conferencias dictadas en el Instituto Etnológico Nacional

[53 cont.]

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*756 [Lectures given at the National Ethnological Institute]. Bogotá, 1942.

the two groups at some period of their history, — we cannot say if before or after the Conquest, is based on the presence of certain material cultural techniques of the Arwako [Arhuaco] Indians in the Guajiro group.

Let us now analyze carefully and separately each one of these factors:

*756 Medicine practiced by the shaman. In chapter II of this study, we referred to the shaman's curative methods which are effected through their magic communication with the spirits. These spirits supply the instructions required for the ceremonies and processes that are to be practiced to effect the cures of illnesses caused by the wanurú which have a sick person in their power. We again refer the reader then to chapter II.

781 Medicine by divination. Before entering fully into this subject, we feel obliged to clarify somewhat the diviner's position in La Guajira and to learn something more, if only superficially, of the processes of divination.

There are certain men and women capable of seeing secret events that have occurred or foreseeing those that will occur. For this they employ different objects; some use a machete (an item of acculturation), and by closely studying its edge they divine, for example, what has happened at the site of a robbery and where the stolen objects will be found. Others make use of burning tobacco and others, finally, of a burning firebrand.

787
[776] In this aspect of divination the world of the spirits plays as great a role as it does in general in all the themes of magic, since the chain of events in the case of the divination of a robbery, for example, is that the spirit of the diviner disengages itself from his body and goes in search of the lost articles, following the track of the thief until it finds the hiding place and consequently the stolen goods, returning then to the body of the diviner to communicate the result to him so that he can, on his part, transmit the information to the party who has come to consult him. [54]

[54]

*756 The shaman also has this power of divination at times,
787 and he, as well as the others, can foretell deaths and other events that will happen. The shaman by reason of his known inherent powers inspires more faith in his prophesies, especially as these practically never fail to be fulfilled.

*756 One of the functio[illegible] a diviner who divines by means of
791 tobacco, for example, is to decide at a gathering of shamans to which he is expressly summoned whether a certain individual shows definite symptoms that he will become the host of a spirit of the same class as their own. This diviner generally is not a graduate shaman but is a man or woman of great experience
* in this type of "science." The diviner places the tobacco or manilla, in his mouth and a burning firebrand in his right hand, which he moves up and down while he discourses; he watches it fixedly and gives his verdict in accordance with the variations he notes in the burning stick. This verdict is considered final.

755 Shamans in some cases learn the art of divination by the
*756 use of a glowing brand to find out, in the event of their being
787 called to cure a sick man, whether they should take the case or not. For the test they take a firebrand; they call on the spirit to come to their aid. They remain with the brand in hand, without blowing on it, and carefully observe the different changes which occur in it through the action of the flame, and from these changes they deduce what will happen. If the firebrand goes out while they are watching it, it means that the sick man is going to die, and hence his presence will not be required.

787 The ceremony of divination by means of fire must be carried out at night never by day. There are diviners who make use of a burning reed or cane for this ceremony. They hold it in the hand and do not take their eyes off it, paying close attention to the changes in the flame, if any, in the blazing up or dying down of the ember, and any other variations they may see. According to all these details, they decide on what divinatory acts are called for and what should be used to locate lost objects or stolen animals. The diviner endeavors to trace the process of the actual robbery in the flame and after that the route the lost object took until he discovers its whereabouts, so that he can state where it is and who was the thief.

[54 cont.]

787 But what is most interesting is that each person in La Guajira can learn the signs that determine divination according to the different methods that make this art of prophecy possible, and make use of them in order to help anyone who may ask his aid or to satisfy his own curiosity about many things he desires to know. The women are especially greatly addicted to divinatory arts [55] to find out from a distance what their absent husbands are doing or what may happen to them when they are far from home. The process is as follows: First the tobacco is lit, then a special prayer is recited asking that what is occurring, or is going to happen, be revealed. Then the woman starts to suck on the tobacco and to observe most carefully every change in the tobacco once it begins to burn. For example, if it emits sparks this means that the person about whom the divinatory enquiry is being made is going to receive money; if it opens in the middle it means that the husband is ill; and he is gravely ill if the ash goes black. Other characteristic signs show when the husband has taken another woman and when he is with her.

This circumstance, that any ordinary person can learn the known methods of foretelling the future, is one which interests us at the moment because it appertains to the aspect of medicine we are investigating. These diviners, usually women,
are the ones who, in these cases, decide what kind of illness
[755 is attacking the patient — a child — and how it was contracted,
753] (generally by direct contamination through the mother during
her pregnancy from an animal that had touched food eaten by
her). By the same token, they decide what curing methods must be followed to free the patient from the illness from which he suffers.

To clarify this point we quote several pertinent examples taken from our field notes.

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825 It is said in Nazaret, and it is a belief extensively accepted all over the peninsula, that a bird called soche, which is accustomed to withdraw to the Sierra de Macuira during its hours of sleep, is harmful to the native inhabitants when it flies over their homes, as it is a carrier of bronchitis, which it spills on to the roofs of their houses, from whence the children of the home pick up the contagion and die.

G [55 cont.]

755 When the child at birth, or a few days afterward, is afflicted with stomach-ache and other characteristic symptoms determined by divination, the cause is that the mother during her pregnancy had imprudently eaten a watermelon which previously had been tasted by a fox. This fact having been proved by the art and talent of the diviner, she proceeds to carry out the cure of the infant, which consists of searching out a fox, killing and quartering it, separating the bones from the flesh and burning them and reducing them to powder. The powder resulting from this calcination is used to anoint around the child's anal sphincter after an evacuation. A part of the meat of the dead animal is roasted and is given [56] to the sick child. If both remedies are applied at the opportune moment, the child will rapidly recover – at least this is the Guajiro belief.

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854 It might be thought that in this case it would be logical for the affected person to be the mother herself, as it was she who ate the contaminated fruit, but one must bear in mind that to the primitive, the infant, as with us, is a relatively defenseless being. For this reason he requires greater protection, because evil things, due to his weak defenses, will readily make a prey of his small body. The evil things in this case are represented by the wicked spirits whose object is to spread sickness. To uphold our statement it is sufficient to quote the case of the

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846 Witoto Indians, inhabitants of the Amazonian selva, with their social institution called the covada [couvade] and their general custom of covering their children's bodies with curly vegetable fibers to disguise them and give them the appearance of small monkeys. Let us see what couvade is: "The one most concerned with this affair" – the birth of the new child – "is the husband because it is he who has to bear the rigors of the strict diet involved. In practice, once natus est homo and the essential obstetrical duties are carried out, the Indian mother hands over the fruit of her womb to the husband. He takes charge of the infant and, acting as if he were the mother, takes it with him to his hammock where he stays for eight days, keeping to a diet which might well be adopted by the most fastidious lady. But before he does this he first of all puts on mourning, that is, he paints himself

[56 cont.]

846 black so that he looks like an African .... During the eight days the Indian woman attends to all the husband's work in the sown fields, loads yucca, collects firewood, etc. Later the Indian, once he has finished his period of diet, rises from his hammock, goes to the river, and with a thorough bathing washes off the black ointment until he becomes clean again and his natural self, as they say, in Adam's clothing." (39)

> 39. Anonymous: Relaciones Interesantes y datos históricos sobre las Misiones del Caquetá y Putumayo [Interesting stories and historical data about the Caquetá and Putumayo missions], 2d., I, 36-37.

In this socio-magic incident of relevant importance, in which the missionary saw nothing more than a curious aspect of Indian life, what is shown is really a change of personality when confronted with an evil spirit: The man is transformed into a woman (at least he behaves like one, taking charge of the newborn child and carrying out the roles that a woman should perform during the eight days of regulation diet), and the mother behaves as if she were the father (also substituting for him in the work which is his responsibility), and all this is done with the 846 object of warding off evil spirits from the newborn child. In 854 addition to the father completes his disguise by covering his body with what [57] the missionaries called "mourning" [luto], that is, with black paint with which he anoints his whole body. Deceived by all these tricks carried out by both the parents, the evil spirits should not know where to find the baby — who ought to be beside his mother — and so he — the child — is safe from their evil influence.

859 But this system to protect the child does not stop there. 291 It continues, according to the missionaries, as "they take the child and until it is about two years old dress it in a garment so peculiar that at first sight one doubts whether it is a human being or not. They cover all its body except its face with the juice of a tree ... very sticky, and over this juice is spread

[57 cont.]

W 854 291 a wooly substance from another tree which is very similar to the balso. So dressed, the infant Indian, lifted onto the bare shoulders of its mother or clinging to her knees, appears in reality very like a small monkey. With only this savage dress, these Indians are quite happy." ... (40)

40. Anon. Op. cit., 2d, I, 37.

W 854 The missionary is right when he compares these children to small monkeys. The idea of dressing the child in so peculiar a costume is not just to protect him from the vagaries of the climate, or to dress him with greater or lesser aesthetic taste, but to safeguard him from evil spirits by means of this disguise, which constitutes a veritable transformation of his physical personality. The child on being dressed up in this extraordinary covering is really changed into another being, so that the evils he might attract to himself lose their effectiveness since the spirits are deceived by the substitution that has been made.

G 755 A method of curing very similar to that we have just described is the one used when a newborn child shows signs of intestinal trouble and diarrhea, evacuating something like spittle. The woman who is acting as diviner discovers by her G [753] art that the sickness attacking the infant is due to its mother having allowed a duck to eat part of her food. For this reason the child passes its fecal matter in a way similar to that of a duck. How does one proceed, then, to restore the infant to health? The feathers around the anus of the duck are plucked out, burned, and the ashes are reduced to powder. As soon as the infant's bowels have moved, his mother must clean him carefully and then apply the powder of the ashes of the feathers around his anal sphincter. If the diviner's diagnosis has been correct, the child should recover quickly on the application of the prescribed remedy. [58]

G [842] 753 755 If during her pregnancy the mother should eat fruit which has been previously pecked at by any kind of bird, the child on being born will have stomach trouble and his excrement will be similar to that of the bird. The Indian women who are

[58 cont.]

755 expert in these sicknesses and who devote themselves to applying the remedies and divining the causes of such illnesses indicate by what bird the fruit which the mother ate was contaminated. Once the origin of the sickness has been determined, they proceed to carry out the method of cure which entails hunting and capturing the bird responsible, which, once killed, is roasted, and the meat fed to the child. A sancocho [stew] is also prepared, using portions of the bird, a good part of which is fed to the child. With this medicine the infant should be quickly cured. If this does not effect a cure, the divination has been incorrectly made, and it was not that kind of bird that pecked at the fruit eaten by the mother during her pregnancy. The whole process must therefore be done over again to discover with absolute certainty what animal caused the child's sickness.

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[757] If a pregnant woman should eat the meat of a hen that has been killed by a sparrow hawk, the child will be born sickly, his excretions will be green, and his crying will be like the cry of a hawk. When they do not know the origin of the sickness, they apply home remedies or those of any local curer [curandero]. If these do not bring about the desired effect, then they must turn to divination. The diviner will decide that the mother ate the flesh of a chicken that had been killed by a sparrow hawk. The curing method will follow a similar process to that previously noted: a hawk is found and killed; a leg of the creature is taken, and the bone is well cleaned and allowed to dry. When it is sufficiently dry it is boiled, and the child's body bathed with the resulting infusion.

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[illegible] The meat of such a hen -- contaminated by the hawk which had eaten some of it -- is also harmful to children in general, boys and girls, and also adults. Every time it is eaten it causes sterility. For this reason the magic taboo on this meat is lifted only for the old and the very aged who have already lost their procreative powers and in consequence have nothing to fear in this respect.

756 Household medicine. This system of medicine, which, as we have said, is independent of shamans and diviners, is based above all on the practice of certain magic practices directly

[58 cont.]

755 associated with some prohibitions of a taboo nature or with established social customs, the origin and in part even significance of which is unknown. But what attracts our attention in this aspect of Guajiro medical [59] practice is preventative rather than curative nature. To demonstrate this, we quote some examples:

753 During the period of pregnancy, neither the father nor the
755 mother should be present at the exhumation of the dead, a cere-
mony which the Indians hold to comply with the rites of the
843 secondary burial. If this injunction is disobeyed, the infant about to be born will, at birth or a few days later, have a sickly appearance and will be afflicted with constant diarrhea and night sweats, and will be characterized by a very pronounced paleness and extreme thinness.

755 If this occurs, if through carelessness the parents witness the exhumation of a corpse during the mother's pregnancy and her child is born sickly, they will not try to blame the child's illness on any other cause than that just stated. In accordance with this decision, they will proceed to apply the curing method appropriate for such an emergency, which, as we noted in the previous chapter, "Magic and Sacrifice," is as follows: (a) They wait until there is a fiesta of a ceremonial nature for the exhumation of human remains and then place the infant inside the recently opened body of the animal that has been sacrificed for the ceremony. (b) If the infant cannot be taken to the place where the ceremony is being held, a bone of the sacrificed animal is taken, left to dry, and cooked, and the infant is bathed in this water. (c) If there is no possibility of a ceremony of the type described being held in the near future, a hole is made in the sand, and the child is buried therein up to its neck and is then covered with the loose earth.

843 Neither should the husband of a pregnant woman under any
845 circumstances dig a grave or assist in the construction of a vault
764 (an element of acculturation) destined for the primary or second-
[177] ary burial of any person. If he does his wife will suffer the consequences of this disrespect in her delivery, which will not be normal: prolonged for several days, very painful, and with serious consequences for the mother and for the coming child.

[59 cont.]

843 A pregnant woman should never be present at or watch a
845 burial, for if she does so, she will have a difficult childbirth:
the infant's arrival will be delayed in a manner both painful
and difficult for the mother.

755 Anyone who may have touched the corpse of a person
758 whose death has not been natural – who has been murdered,
764 for example – is prohibited from approaching the side of one
who is sick, because this individual will die because of his
presence. This prohibition is also extended to those who have
directly assisted in the exhumation of human remains. Furthermore,
both of these persons are strictly forbidden to come near
[753] children [60] or places where they may be, because their presence,
contaminated by the nature of the dead, will cause the
children to fall ill.

Serpents also have magic influence on pregnant women.
843 In this case it is not an influence destined to injure the unborn
825 child but is directed against the mother herself, who feels in
various ways in her own flesh the malignant action of the
reptile. For instance, if a woman during her term of pregnancy
sees a hunting snake [culebra cazadora] and remains looking at
it for some time, her child will be born stupid. The explanation
that the Indians give for this very generally accepted belief
is that as this snake gives the impression of being stupid, because
it does not attack people as other snakes do and does
them no harm but confines itself to hunting young birds for food,
it transmits this quality to the infant. A mother who encounters
such a reptile should pretend not to have seen it and automatically
look elsewhere.

If during this same period the mother-to-be should see
825 any kind of snake (other than a hunting snake) she will suffer a
843 miscarriage or some kind of painful mishap related to the de-
845 livery. To avoid these possible ills, the woman should try to
step over the snake. If in spite of this difficulties in childbirth
occur, then they resort to a curing method which consists in
finding a similar snake, killing it, opening it up carefully, and
localizing in the interior of its intestines the water that it has
drunk, collecting this and taking it to the sick woman, so that
after she has drunk it, her labor will be hastened and will then
occur without any serious complications.

[60 cont.]

825 843 845

If in this same condition the woman sees a serpent under a stone or in a hole, her delivery will be delayed, and it will be difficult and long. As in the case immediately preceding this, prevention depends on the indifference shown by the woman toward the snake: She should immediately look away from the creature. But the coincidence of seeing a snake and its being in a hole or under a stone brings about a new complication, since two elements are involved: first, the snake as such as we have seen in the previous accounts; and second, its apparently difficult position, which is transmitted to the woman in the moment of childbirth in the form of delay in the birth and the physical difficulty of its accomplishment.

Also, the childbirth will be delayed several days and will be extremely painful if during her pregnancy the woman's husband commits the imprudence of killing a snake of any kind.

843 825 [55[illegible]]

[61] The snake then, as we noted at the beginning and as we have been able to confirm by means of the examples submitted, exercises a special magic influence on pregnant women. The position of the snake when seen, either directly by the woman or by the husband, makes this influence greater. We also heard from a story told to us that another belief exists related to the snake and women's pregnancy. We cannot say whether it really exists or if it is the product of imagination and legend because the two elements seem to be mixed up. It concerns a certain serpent that attacks people by jumping at them from a tree and forcing its tail into their ears, and the fact that it only attacks women at a certain period of their pregnancy or a pregnant woman's husband at the same period.

According to the story related to us, during the first three months of pregnancy the woman may be attacked by a very exceptional male serpent with three colors: green, black, and white, placed dorsally in the form of an X. (The female of the species, according to the story, has only one color: green.) The male serpent attacks the wife during the early months of pregnancy, as well as her husband. The creature is usually found hidden in the branches of trees which shade paths and can spring like an arrow from its place of ambush, attacking people with great accuracy. With a spring it settles on its victim's head,

[61 cont.]

825 twining itself around it, and with its tail, which is very thin, it 843 pierces his ear. The pressure is so great that generally the tip of its tail comes out of the other ear, which causes the death of the person attacked. The method of defense does not invoke magic as in other cases but is limited to the simple precaution [751] taken by the woman of going about with a pañuelo [kerchief] on her head which covers her ears. Hence the serpent winds itself around the head but is unable to introduce its tail into the ear of the victim. The woman, on reaching home or on meeting someone, will be able to take revenge on the snake and kill it. But the snake also takes its own precautions, according to the story, as, if the husband and wife walk together, it will not attack for fear that the man will kill it.

Up to this point the story is no more than an interesting legend, the fruit of the primitive's imagination, but for the study we are interested in the latter part of the story, which runs as follows, has great value. If the same serpent on the other hand sees a woman when her pregnancy is advanced (after the fourth month), the woman seems to have an evil influence on the snake, which appears to suffer from paralysis and becomes helpless, lying on the [62] ground unable to spring into the trees. There in that condition it can be easily killed. If it is not dispatched at this moment, the snake recovers its strength and agility as soon as the woman goes away.

Once again we see the magic interaction of serpent and pregnant woman. But there is this difference between the magic action of the other animals which makes its influence felt through the mother upon the child to be born, and that of the serpent which discharges all its magic power directly on the mother, provoking in her pains and delays at birth, abortions, etc. We would ask why?

We have up to this point collected a series of facts which quite clearly show the magic-participatory action of animals in the lives of the Guajiro natives and above all in what refers to the explanation for the presence of sickness. Furthermore, the action of the snake is related to one of the most interesting phenomena in the life cycle, childbirth, which includes the

[63 cont.]
825 whole period of pregnancy. The duality of childbirth-serpent
843 is brought to our notice with an insistence and disconcerting realism which we will endeavor to explain.

If we look into the Guajiro family organization we can
596 see how that community taken as a homogeneous whole is
613 divided into series of extended family groups which follow the line of maternal filiation. Belonging to a family group are the mother, the sons and daughters of the mother, the sons and daughters of the mother's daughters, and so on successively. The administration of the family is not in the hands of the father, who is not considered as such, but in those of the maternal uncles, the eldest of these being predominant. Inheritance also
428 is determined by this system, and sons inherit nothing from their natural father, but from their mother or their maternal uncles. The property of the father is split up among his nephews, sons of his sister, whom he considers as sons. Patrilocality and
591 matrilocality exist, the former predominating. The family group, wrongly named by some authors _casta_ is very much
614 extended, and to it belong all those bearing the same surname. Each large family group has its own property mark or brand and a representative animal. Thus, for example: [63]

Family groups	Representative animals
Uriána (41)	jaguar

[109]

41. For the convenience of our readers we have adapted the phonetics of all these Guajiro names to Spanish orthography, using the most apparent sounds.

Urariyú	rattlesnake
Uriyú	snake
Wouriyú	partridge
Uyáwayú	_coquera_ (a species of dove)
Ipuana	_cari-cari_
Sápuana	bittern

[63 cont.]

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Family groups	Representative animals
Jayáriyú	dog (42)
Ápshana	buzzard
Sí(j)uana	wasp
Soryú	cataneja
Páusayú	bee

42. It should be made clear that this animal symbol is, or must be, relatively modern, as the dog was unknown before the Conquest. The substitution of this for some other animal, we do not know which, must have occurred in the Post-conquest era for reasons unknown up to now.

The social or mythical meaning of these animals representing the extended family groups has been lost. At least we could not obtain any verbal declaration from our informants in which we could perceive the actuating presence of the totem, which is what possibly in olden times these animal figures represented. But we have in some cases been able to establish linguistic correspondence between the name of the family group and its characteristic animal. To verify this we can show some examples (43).

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43. We expound this short linguistic study with some reservations since our stay in La Guajira was relatively short, two months approximately, in which length of time the study of the language scarcely reached the rudimentary stage.

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1. uri or wüi = snake
wayú = Indian, people

[*63 cont.*]

192 *uriyú* = Indians (people of the snake)

614 2. *uráichiser* = people of the snake

825 *Wuradiru* = fish-serpent, (Arawak of Guiana) (44)

44. Taken from: Anonymous: *Arawakisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch* [Arawak-German Dictionary]. Copy in manuscript form in possession of the Moravian Unity of Brethren at Zittau (translated from the German by Eginhard Menghins).

[*64*]

wayú = Indian, people

uráriyú = people of the rattlesnake

3. *uri* = snake

ana = (We do not know the exact meaning of this particle)

uriána = must be "descendant of the snake,"

or something similar. Here the linguistic correspondence between the family group and the name of its representative animal is lost to us, as the word or words to designate "jaguar" are *karáira* and *kánahaput*. But in any case the relation with serpent is interesting.

Another case similar to the former is shown by the Wouriyú family group, which has the partridge for its representative animal. The word for this bird is *pér*; on the other hand, our breakdown of the word *wouriyú* – bearing in mind the reservation already referred to is as follows:

w (from *wa* or *wayú*, "we") = our [masc., fem.]

oú = eye

uri = snake

yú (from *wayú*, Indian, people) = people

From which we can deduce that *wouriyú* can be translated as "people of the eye of our snake."

[64 cont.]

192 In the case of the Uyárayó group, we find another perfect
614 correspondence between the name of the animal and that of the
825 family group:

uyára = cauquero (a species of deer)
yó = from wayú Indian, people
uyárayó = people of the cauquero

614 The foregoing demonstrates the existence within the Guajiro community of the remains of an ancient clan organization, matrilineal and totemic. We say remains because the significance of the totem, as we have noted, has almost completely disappeared, since there does not exist a fixed prohibition against killing certain animals (in this case the animal corresponding to the group) nor any ceremonial ritual related to it. We do not wish to enlarge on this subject of the existence of totems in La Guajira as this will be treated in a later thesis. We only wish to emphasize the value of the serpent in Guajiro
614 magic for which no [65] clearer explanation can be found than
825 the connection it maintains with the ancient beliefs related to
843 the totem. It shows us that the greater percentage of Guajiro totemic clans are connected in their name to this creature; also that the serpent's evil effects fall directly on pregnant women, causing harm not to the children, as occurs with other animals (the fox, sparrow hawk, duck...), but directly to the mother.

* * *

825 The mother-to-be should also avoid seeing a sparrow hawk
843 because if she disobeys this ruling her child will be born bleary eyed, since they say this bird is.

843 A pregnant woman's husband must not go hunting with a
845 modern weapon — the rifle — since he can do this with the traditional weapons, the bow and arrow, for if he does not obey this rule, his wife's labor will be prolonged for a long time, and no remedies nor any other attempts to help her will hasten the birth in any way. When a husband has failed to obey this magico-preventative medicinal norm, it is necessary to obtain a rifle — preferably the one the husband used in his hunting —

[65 cont.]

843 and very carefully wash it [in water]. Giving the woman this
845 water to drink will permit her to deliver the child immediately.

If a Goajiro father has to set off on a long journey on
751 horseback, leaving behind his newborn son, he must comply
854 with another custom of a magic nature, which requires him to
wrap the cinch of his horse about the child for a few minutes.
492 If he fails to do this, the child will be very ill and complain
pitifully during the time his father is absent. An equivalent form
under the same circumstances is the father's customarily placing
his foot on the newborn baby's chest for a brief moment. If
this obligation is not complied with, either through forgetfulness
or ill will on the part of the father, the mother, or some close
relative of the child, must find the father's old sandals and
place them on the child's chest for a few moments in order to
obtain the effect desired, which the ritual action if performed
by the father would have accomplished.

We venture to attempt an explanation of the last two
751 phenomena as follows: The object that is sought in the fulfillment
854 of these two traditional customs is to drive away from the child
the presence of the wanurú or the evil spirit of sickness. The
pressure exercised by the father's foot or, lacking this, [66] by
[753 the father's old sandals, symbolizes his presence in the child
[illegible]] precisely in the place where the spirits in order to attain their
evil designs often lodge in the child's body, i.e., its chest, as
we shall have occasion to see in the following chapter. This
symbolic presence of the father prevents the spirits from approaching near the child to work it harm. Lastly, the custom of wrapping
the cinch of [the harness of] the horse on which the father will
be traveling around the body of the child is intimately linked
[128] with the belief of these natives that the horse has the power to
frighten away the wanurú, or spirit of sickness, with its snorting;
more simply this same protection is achieved by placing a
horse's skull in a place near the houses. (Cf. "Amulets, Fetishes,
Talismans." Also, in this case there is a substitution of the magic
formula (using the cinch instead of the horse), a substitution that
has exactly similar effects and the action of which could be
based on one of the laws of magic established by Sir J. G. Frazer

[66 cont.]

751 according to which "things which have once been in contact with
[illegible] each other continue to act on each other at a distance after the physical contact has been severed." (45) [Cited in Spanish.]

45. Frazer. La Rama Dorada [The Golden Bough], III, 27.

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[766]
There is another medical preventative, also of a magic nature, taken to avoid infant mortality in Guajiro marriages after the death of the first-born child. This preventative obliges them to bury the body in a certain manner. It also imposes upon the mother a further seclusion, such as she underwent on reaching puberty (ceremony of initiation), and entails her taking certain medicines extracted from vegetable roots. If all these prescriptions are not fully complied with, her future children will die successively as soon as they are born.

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Once the child is born, the placenta must be thrown a long way away from the house and completely lost to sight. If it is buried it will bring bad luck to the child, who in consequence of such an imprudence will live a weakling and suffer greatly until his death.

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When only two or three days after the mother has given birth, her breasts badly swell with severe pains and a lack of milk, her husband must place his foot on her naked breast, pressing lightly on it, with which treatment the woman will recover. When a mother loses her milk after a long period of breast feeding and is no longer able to nourish her child, she must be struck on her shoulder and her breasts a number of times with the branches of a plant which is found mainly in the neighborhood of [67] Puerto Estrella and which on being cut emits a white liquid.

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The Guajiro takes great care of any of his hair which has been cut off, as he is afraid that it can be used to do him harm. This fear is based on the belief that if anyone can obtain possession of a lock of hair, whatever harm he may do to this will react directly on its owner; if that hair, for example, is thrown on the fire, its original owner will suffer a similar fate:

[67 cont.]

826 he will die consumed by flames. Likewise, if a lock of human
754 hair is buried with a small quantity of dog excrement, the person who carries out this act of witchcraft can cause any harm he wishes to the owner of the hair.

648 Medicine practiced by foreigners. To ensure that his child
757 will be sound and fit and show greater resistance to sickness, the Guajiro father makes use of the medicine of the Arhuaco, who like the other natives we know connect this art directly with magic. It is well to take note, before pursuing this description, that the Arhuaco are held to be excellent doctors by all their neighbors, not only by the Indians but also by mestizos and mulattos, and even by Whites. The fame of these curers is such that sick people from the neighboring cities of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta and even from Maracaibo have themselves carried to them to be cured of their illnesses, or, as a last resort, send them some of their personal articles of underclothing by which the Arhuaco curer determines the sickness from which the individual is suffering and sends the necessary medicines.

The Guajiro have not escaped this influence. Their geographical nearness facilitates communication with the Arhuaco, but we do not know whether this interchange of relations was already established before the Conquest or if it is due to the external influence of the colonists who have settled on the slopes of the Sierra or in regions close to them, who in their turn have transmitted the legend of the fame of the Arhuaco as doctors to the Indians of La Guajira.

757 The fact is that generally, shortly before the birth of a
751 child or when some opportunity presents itself, the father goes
278 to the Arhuaco, and from one of them who knows the preventa-
843 tive or curative value of plants he obtains several of these in order to doctor his child or prevent its sicknesses. Among these herbs are the vira-vira, quina dulce ["sweet quina], the frailejón, and a number of others. These herbs are shredded and put into a bottle containing rum and to this mixture is added two kinds of drops, also of plant juices, which have been carefully [68] "whispered" or "muttered" over by the Arhuaco doctor. These drops, in addition to the plants to which we have previously

[68 cont.]

757 referred, are what contain the curative properties because of their
751 magic force. These medicines are applied in the following
278 manner: The infusion of herbs with rum and the drops "whis-
843 pered over" are added to previously boiled water, and the child is bathed at birth with this mixture. When the mother feels the pains of approaching childbirth, she also takes a glass of this mixture and repeats this a few moments after the child is born, which helps her to get rid of the placenta.

* * *

75 Thus far the notes that we have concerning the magico-preventative or curative medical methods of the Indians of La Guajira [sic]. These show first, how medicine, like birth, sickness, and death, is subject to a series of cultural patterns, the result of the individual's relations, magic or spiritualistic (so far as the spirit of the dead is concerned), with his environ-
774 ment. The latter are to be understood in their widest meaning, since as Doctor W. Born says:

> "Primitive man's intellectual world is not really limited to sorcery since there are too many enigmas facing young humanity such as birth and death, dreams and sickness. To explain these, primitive man appeals to various supernatural forces. From experiences in the world of dreams, he derived the belief in a soul as a clear explanation of the consciousness of "ego," which is opposed to the destiny of death. The power of the soul to free itself from its body (as dreams seemed to indicate) accepted, it was natural that he should accept the possibility of the existence of independent and active souls in nature. This state renders feasible not only a polydemonism but also the notion of a material soul. Polydemonism admits that a demon, a sort of soul, lives in everything in nature, while the substance of the soul is an invisible energy which emanates from objects. As the substance

[68 cont.]

774 of the soul is uniform, so also the effects of all things are
magically related to one another." (46)

46. Born. Fetiche, Amuleto, Talisman [Fetish, Amulet, Talisman], p. 3.

This polydemonism of which Dr. Born writes, or spiritism
as we have called it, can be seen more clearly in the life of
the Guajiro communities in the chapter which deals with the
[764] aspect of funerals. All the ceremonial relating to the dead is
filled with this belief [69] in the universal soul and in the survival of a personal soul after death.

755 In the chapter we are dealing with we see it also clearly
established, especially in the curative methods followed by
the shaman, or medicine man, who seeks the assistance of his
protector spirit or spirits to find out the kind of illness the sick
man is suffering from and the manner of eradicating it from his
body, as well as in certain aspects of household remedies con-
764 sisting of preventative methods. In no way different are the
783 taboo prohibitions related to the dead, the burials and exhuma-
784 tions in general, animals sacrificed in funeral ceremonial, and
persons who have been in contact, directly or indirectly, with the dead by assisting in the burial or exhumation of human remains, in digging graves, in imprudently gazing on the placing of a burial in the grave, etc., all of which contaminate with the essence of the dead, who by his very nature, by the act of having passed to a higher life situated on a plane of superior potentialities to that which he has left, is converted into something dangerous, sacred or impure, as the case may be, and for this reason contaminating.

751 This contaminating action of the dead also appears in the
775 aspect of medicine since they endeavor to avoid possible harm
to children before birth and therefore to pregnant women or those in actual childbirth, because, as we have already seen these are the most likely victims of the malevolent action of spirits. Children especially receive such influences through their parents when they are in the mother's womb and have such poor means of self-defense.

[69 cont.]
[illegible] of self-defense. If we take into account the high infant mor-
165 tality among the Guajiro population, which reaches a very high
751 rate (32.97%) according to the data collected by the investigators
776 Virginia de Pineda Giraldo and María Rosa de Recasens, whose
findings were published in the Boletín de Arqueología (47), we

> 47. Pineda Giraldo Roberto. "Informe preliminar sobre aspectos sociales y económicos de la Guajira [Preliminary Report on Social and Economic Aspects of La Guajira]."

can even better explain the series of prohibitions, of patterns established to protect the future mothers and unborn children from the malevolent influence of the spirits, whether of humans, animals, etc.

751 On the other hand, we can deduce from this study the fol-
755 lowing points: 1) Medicine practiced by shamans, intermediaries between the two worlds, is carried out almost exclusively on adults, for whom they prescribe the curative methods they deem essential in accord with the patient's illness. 2) On the other hand, curing by [70] divination, which we have called household curing, using a common term, has its field of action among newborn babies and mothers-to-be. 3) In this last type we encounter an extremely interesting fact, the ambivalence of certain animals, represented by their double capacity to cause illness and at the same time to cure it. 4) In the application of household preventative medicine, magic called sympathetic is frequently practiced. 5) In one of the accounts we find the occurrence of
853 the magic action of a plant. This deals with the plant used to
824 make the mammary glands secrete their milk after a mother had
278 lost it and the child still requires to be breast fed. As the plant is able to produce milk, the mother by contact with it will inevitably be able to do the same, according to native belief. This aspect has been fully treated by Castiglione in one of the chapters
278 of his work Encantamiento y Magia [Enchantment and Magic].
757 We wish to quote only a few paragraphs which will better clarify

[70 cont.]

278 757 the magico-curative value of the plant under discussion: "Sometimes," says Castiglione, "as has been said, this popularity" (that of medicinal plants) "is derived from real therapeutic qualities as, for example, the use of quina roots, which is prescribed by scientific medicine; its power to cure intermittent fevers was well known among the peoples of pre-Columbian America. In 278 755 many other cases the virtues of these plants depend on their appearance, on the similarity of their roots, their flowers, or their fruit to certain characteristics of sicknesses or to some organ of the body." (48) Somewhat earlier, in referring to this second category of plants, he tells us: "The second category embraces innumerable substances which by themselves, speaking objectively, cannot in any way have any effect, either favorable or unfavorable, but whose value stems exclusively and directly from the ideas they provoke in the minds of the people concerned." (49).

48. Castiglioni, Op. cit., VI, 80.

49. Castiglioni, Op. cit., VI, 81.

The influence of magic in medicine is borne out, finally, by the custom of visiting the Arhuaco doctors, in whom they see powerful magicians who possess the secret of praying to a powerful spirit to impregnate their remedies with its essence. It is this aspect which attracts the Guajiro, not the plants in themselves but the spirit, the demon if we may call it so, that is present in the drops which have been prayed over by the Arhuaco curer.

[71] V

Magic and Funerals

811 With the Guajiro Indians, as with the majority of primitive peoples, the complex ceremonial relating to death accounts for a great part of their activities, their manner of acting, thinking, and

[71 cont.]

82 feeling. Not being able to understand the logical processes of life with its principal phenomena of birth, development, growth, old age, and death, the Indian looks for an explanation that agrees, at least in appearance, with his beliefs, with his limited capacity for knowledge, and he steadfastly adheres to the traditions received in cultural inheritance, traditions which all have a subjective flavor and in which the supernatural, the purely metaphysical – even within the physical phenomenon itself – dominates the intellectual and sensible panorama. If at first he
81 attributed the phenomenon of birth to the supernatural action,
844 far off in space, of an animal, a plant, or other object which in course of time became his totem in his mythical ancestor made divine, later his mental explorations try to find a new explanation; his totem for different causes having now lost its value and only remaining with him as a vague memory, he tries to find, let us say, a new explanation which agrees better with the reality surrounding him. Hence we find him affirming, like the Guajiro, that birth is due to the union of the masculine semen with the menstrual blood, which produces the fetus. The association, even if not exact, is not extraordinarily far from the truth in as much as the association of both these factors brings about an apparent conjunction of the same in order to accomplish the complicated processes of fertility and birth.

761 But, in the explanation of the phenomenon of death, it is
177 the realms of the unknown which continue to exert a major influence on the minds of primitives and, in the present case, on the minds of the Guajiro in particular. It is true that the constant influence of missionaries, colonists, traders and stock breeders, teachers and soldiers has started to change the state of things, inculcating in the Indian another class of beliefs which are not always coincident with reality, for the simple reason that three different races live together in our country, [72] and all are equally fanatical in their beliefs: the Negro with his fetishism and fantastic mythology; the Indian also with his mythology and his subjection to the spirits of the dead; and the Spaniard, as fanatic as the rest or as renegade. But it is also true that in the Indian's personality there still remain strongly impressed his primitive beliefs, his traditions accumulated over thousands of years, which

[72 cont.]

761 have been transformed step by step through the evolutionary
177 process of thought as it fulfills its stupendous labor towards perfection.

761 Death is not a real death to the Guajiro. Accustomed as
775 he is to interpret sleep as a separation, a liberation of the spirit, the universal soul, from the framework of the body (Cf. "Sickness and Medicine"), death to him is nothing more than a greater and definite liberation of the spirit to go from this world to another — to that of the spirits — unknown and phantomlike but as real to his imagination as his own existence. For this same reason and because of the fear infused in the primitive by these disembodied spirits — which have left their material body and are capable of taking on new and unknown forms, capable of transporting themselves to a distance, capable in fact of deeds unachievable by mortal man — the Indians believe it to be indispensable for their tranquillity to practice a series of ceremonies, rites, to maintain a fixed and constant attitude toward the dead, because these spirits by the physical fact of the separation of the soul from the body possess special potentialities which confer on them the power to harm the living whenever their person has been offended by the violation of any of the norms established in the ceremonial for the dead.

We also have to take into account the fact that for the primitive a dead person is not only absolutely a sacred being — and as such untouchable — but he is also considered a potential enemy. Freud recognizes this when he states: "We know already that the dead are powerful sovereigns; possibly it would surprise us to find out now that they are also considered enemies." (50)

50. Freud. Totem y Tabú [Totem & Taboo], II, 75.

This duality, which we have shown in the previous paragraph, corroborated by the quotation from Professor Freud, will be seen more fully as we progress in this study and consider the different categories of danger that are attributed to the spirits of the dead in accord with the circumstances of their death or the disrespect with which they were treated. [73]

753 [73] In the Guajiro mentality sickness, as we were able to see
751 in the corresponding sections ("Medicine and Sickness" and "Life
Cycle of the Shaman"), is not something provoked by natural
causes but is the consequence of the malevolent action of some
special being, above all, of a spirit. So a series of beliefs,
magic preventatives, have been established in order to avoid or
ward off the hostile action of these spirits on the individual, as
we were able to note in the chapter "Sickness and Medicine."
We also saw in the matter relating to magic and sickness how
certain animals, plants, and objects could be agents by con-
tamination or participation in the cause and development of
[775] sickness. But it is particularly the spirit of the dead, offended
and malevolent, that causes major disasters among the Guajiro,
as is shown by their beliefs and their own preventative systems.

We can get aid from linguistics to clarify this concept.
192 The word that the Guajiro uses for illness in general is *wanurú*,
753 and the same word is the one that is used for the spirit of the
775 dead — the devil, according to all writers and even to the na-
[747] tives themselves, due to the effects of religious acculturation
provoked by the Capuchin fathers. Still further, if we break
[196] down the word we find that it is formed of three special particles,
wa, *num ru*, which separately correspond to three different con-
cepts: *Wa* is derived from the first person plural of the personal
pronoun *wayá*, which means "we"; *nu*, or simply *n*, is nothing
more than the general contraction of the third person singular
of the personal pronoun *niá*, "he," and *rú* is a relative particle
derived from *surú* or *hurú* (*s* or *h* according to which dialectal
zone the word is taken from), which signifies "inside," "inside
of," or "within." In view of the idiomatic composition of the
Guajiro dialect, we can with all safety translate the word *wanurú*
as follows: "he, inside of us." The linguistic construction there-
fore corresponds to a social reality: sickness, *wanurú*, is nothing
more than that: the spirit of the dead that has entered an individ-
ual in order to cause him a particular illness for some disrespect
or other that he has shown toward the spirit, or simply just because
it is a malignant and vindictive spirit.

171 The relation sickness — death — spirit, which will later be
753 the object of a special study on our part, can be proved through
775 linguistics in many of the aboriginal Colombian and even American
*756

[73 cont.]

171 groups, as far as we have been able to discover personally or by
753 bibliographical inquiry. To give no more than a small sample of
775 this, let us see [74] two quotations which corroborate our previ-
*756 ous statement, but for clarity before doing this we have to recall
a little about the place of the magician, sorcerer, medicine man, or shaman in aboriginal communities as an intermediary between two worlds, or as the sole means of communication with the spirits through which he successfully obtains his magic effects. This clarification is necessary because on many occasions the word used for sickness or death might be confused with the word used for shaman, or medicine man, for this very condition.

171 For example, Mother Laura, referring to the Katío [Catio]
*756 Indians (51) says: "Among the many peculiarities which study of the customs, usages, and beliefs of the Catío tribe reveals, the most noticeable is jaibanism.

"The etymology of the word jaibaná is as follows: jai = sickness, pana = gathering (derived from capaná, flock or herd). Consequently, this word may be translated: a collection or gathering of sicknesses. The general acceptance is "doctor." (52)

This word jaibaná to which Mother Laura refers corresponds to what ethnographically we might denominate medicine man as

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(51). The Katío Indians belong linguistically and culturally to the Chokó group of the Karib [Carib] linguistic family (Rivet, op. cit.). They lived and still live in a great part of the northeast of Antioquia department in the republic of Colombia.

(52). Montoya, Laura (Rev. Mother). Nociones sobre usos y costumbres de los Catíos en el departamento de Antioquia [Notes on Usages and Customs of the Catío Indians in the Department of Antioquia], p. 148.

[74 cont.]

171 756 he is the witch and curer of the tribe, as we learn from the Mother Superior's writings, a wizard whose supernatural powers place him at the peak of the social pyramid. This *jaibaná* is none other than an individual who has by himself and for himself absorbed the power of the spirits – of the dead – and who by this is able to carry out the same functions as they are capable of, that is, he can do evil or good as the fancy takes him. For this reason "when some illness suddenly attacks the Indians they say they are bewitched, and they point to the person from whom they have received the injury. They dream persistently of a certain *jaibaná* and that he observes them with a grim, severe look or that he lies in ambush for them armed with spears or guns, and from this they assume that the doctor of whom they dream is he who has bewitched them." (53) In this case it is therefore the *jaibaná*, ("collection of sicknesses," according to the etymology) who, taking advantage of his power both to absorb and dominate the spirits, goes about among the Indians causing them harm and also [75] curing them when sick people go to him in search of help. Again we meet with this duality which we have already pointed out regarding the spirits of the dead (friends – enemies) and which we showed in the previous chapter, "Sickness and Medicine," in regard to spirits in general, as well as animals.

171 776 797 775 Among the Chibcha Colombian Indians of the savannas of Cundinamarca, we also find a linguistic and conceptual correspondence between devil and death. In our opinion, among primitives there does not exist, or did not exist among the American aborigines before the Conquest, the concept of devil as such, but only of a spirit of evil which, although it may possess some similarity to the devil of our Catholic religion differs in many aspects from it. From all that we have been able to observe, the idea of the devil among the American primitives, introduced no doubt after the Conquest by Catholic missionaries, corresponds more to an entity, spiritual it is true and capable of

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53. *Ibid.*, p. 151.

[75 cont.]

771 doing good or evil, but always a physical evil, not a spiritual 776 one as done by the devil as conceived in the Catholic religion. 777 Also, according to our observations, this same spirit of the primi- 775 tives is none other than the spirit of the dead, of their ancestors, inhabitants of the "other world," an unreal world that is not directly tangible, or at least not completely so, to the senses but real in the conception, in the faith and beliefs of the primitives. This last characteristic of the American aborigines' demonic spirits, confused with the dead, separates them formally and conceptually from the idea of the devil as understood in Catholicism.

191 Returning to the Chibcha tribe of the savannas, we find 775 that one of the words that their dialect uses to describe a dead 776 person is guajaia (we retain the author's spelling), and the word for "devil" is guaioque. We can attempt to split up the second word in the following way: guaia, que. This last particle that we have split off has the sense of "strong," "vigorous." Thus, by splitting up guaioque -- translated as "devil" by the different writers on the Chibcha language of Cundinamarca -- would really have the meaning of "powerful dead one." (54) We could include many other quotations to corroborate our statement, but, as we have mentioned, we reserve [76] these for a separate work. We only wish to expound our general theory for the better understanding of this study. It is sufficient then for us once again to affirm that death, sickness, spirit (devil), and even medicine man are all concepts that belong to one and the same ideological circle, totally imbued with the spiritualistic content of magic related to the soul of the dead.

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54. The linguistic notes have been taken from two works: El Idioma Chibcha o aborigen de Cundinamarca [The Chibcha or Aboriginal Language of Cundinamarca] by J. Acosta Ortegón and Gramática, Vocabulario, Catecismo i Confesionario de la lengua Chibcha [Grammar, Vocabulary, Catechism, and Confessional of the Chibcha Language] by Ezequiel Uricoechea.

[76 cont.]

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775 We can say that in La Guajira among the spirits of the
dead there are categories determined by capacity to work evil.
Spirits in general are indifferent as long as the established norms
regarding their treatment are not violated, such as the fulfill-
ment of the post-mortem ceremonial, avoidance of the use of
[762] their names, etc. But when the spirit is that of a suicide, then
his standing as an author of evil grows, as the fact of his having
violated the established social order places him automatically at
the margin of the community; he is a social outcast even in the
world of the dead, and his spirit does not wander around as the
others do but face downward and at ground level; for this reason
he is considered an enemy of the community.

773 A Guajiro legend regarding Katétamána Hill relates that
823 in remote times there was a majayura ("a young woman") who
762 had sexual relations with her father and became pregnant. Ac-
cording to the legend, on finding herself in this condition, she
was so ashamed that she wanted to wipe out her social sin by
hanging herself, which she did. Mareiwa, the god of the
Guajiro, told her that as punishment for her offense he would
change her into a hill. For this reason, say the Indians,
Katétamána Hill has the shape of a hanged woman. Ever since,
concludes the story, Indians frequently hang themselves when
any adverse event disturbs their lives.

762 As the legend transcribed above will indicate, an Indian
775 commits suicide when he cannot carry out some act which is at
variance with the established patterns of his family circle or of
society in general. Since he cannot be punished for the violation
when alive, he must pay the penalty after his death. It is his
spirit which receives and feels the consequences of the social sin
he has committed. For this reason the general belief to which
we have already alluded exists that the spirit of the suicide always
wanders face downward and at ground level in the regions of the
dead. [77]

762 But if the punishment of the suicide cannot be inflicted on
768 the individual himself while alive, it can, on the other hand, be
672

[77 cont.]
762 inflicted on the objects which were the principal active agents
768 in carrying out his fatal determination. As the form of suicide
672 that is practiced in La Guajira is almost exclusively that of
hanging, they proceed to burn the branch on which the individual
hanged himself and the rope which he used, because, they
say, these were the direct causes of his death.

With respect to the punishment carried out on the objects
682 (inanimate to us) which served for the carrying out of suicide,
672 several suggestions may be made. In one case, the "compensation
payment for blood" may be recalled, the established customary
law of this community by means of which whatever spilling
of blood that may be caused in any person, voluntary or involuntary,
directly or indirectly, has to be paid for in accordance
[698] ance with a valuation decreed by the so-called "arbitrators,"
or "palabras," who are nothing more than intermediaries named
by the family groups affected to settle the affair peacefully.
This payment is considerable when the blood spilling ends in the
682 victim's death. Should the murderer refuse to pay the sum arranged
628 for (whether in livestock, necklaces, precious stones,
etc.), then the members of the victim's family group take
vengeance on him personally and kill him. All this naturally
ends in war to the death, or putchi, between the two extended
family groups, an occurrence which is extremely frequent in La
682 Guajira. Hence as "compensation payment for blood" cannot
762 be claimed, from these objects (the tree and the rope), they are
672 punished in default by destruction by fire. This hypothesis is
reinforced, if we remember that to the Guajiro Indian, as well as
[774] to most primitives, objects — which to us are not alive — are
able to exercise both good and bad influences on the individual
[778] (Cf. "Sickness and Medicine" and "Amulets, Fetishes, Talismans"),
because they possess a spirit — a kind of mana, or immaterial
force, which surrounds and animates everything.

Another suggestion that could be made with respect to the
762 destruction of the objects used by a suicide is the following: As
783 these articles were in direct contact with the dead man, and
particularly with a corpse as dangerous as a suicide is, it is
necessary that they be destroyed so that the contamination

[77 cont.]
762 783 should not be transmitted to the persons who for any circumstance
may approach or touch them.

The wickedness of the spirit of the suicide, in any event,
762 is seen to be reaffirmed by another Guajiro belief, which is that
769 of not daring to pass at [78] night by the place where an Indian
775 may have hanged himself because his spirit wanders continually
around the place, and being malignant it will certainly pursue
and chase after one in the form of a great flame or some other
shape.

775 As we proceed to set down the present data relating to the participation of the dead in the lives of the Guajiro community, we shall refer to those related to the spirits of suicides with the idea of obtaining greater objectivity in our statements.

Presence and life of the dead. The spirit of the dead, known
usually by the name wanurú and at other times as yoruja, on
being separated from its body wanders about the world. Although
it no longer has any tangible relationship with terrestial things,
it is still dangerous. Usually it takes refuge in lonely and isolated places such as in some cemeteries, in the crevices formed
by sea erosion in Cabo de la Vela, or in the solitudes of the
Emejuy forest. But it appears that in addition to these places
frequented by the spirits of the dead, there is one undetermined
special place far away from La Guajira. It is customary when a
764 woman has died to cover her face with paipai (a paint for the
775 face) before wrapping her in her shroud and placing her in her
coffin ready for burial. The explanation for this is that she is
going on a long journey, a very long journey, and the sun to
which she will be exposed will be very strong and harmful to
her face. For this reason, according to Guajiro custom, they
must try to protect the skin of her face from the sun's action by
the use of this face paint. Also she is going to pay a visit, and
it is indispensable that a woman should have her face painted
when visiting friends or relatives (55).

751 55. The Guajiro woman, every time she is exposed to the sun's rays, protects her face with paipai powder (color of burnt sienna)

[78 cont.]

751 or another powder, *achiote,* mixed with tallow or other animal grease of some kind, which prevents the severe sunburn which the strong desert sun can cause.

764 The following facts give clearer and more convincing
775 proof of the reality of the dead as beings who pass to another life, to a certain point a material one. When a person dies the relatives usually place by his side at the moment of burial a small portion of *chicha* in a gourd; they also put in some meat and rum, as indispensable nourishment which he will require during the long journey he has to make. After the burial they place on his grave one of the objects of his personal ownership which had been used by him to satisfy his primary necessities. These objects [79] can be: a night glass (influence of acculturation through *civilizado* elements) if he is a rich Indian; the jug he used to drink from, or the plate he used for meals. In the case of a woman, in addition to these objects they place a special one, something which she greatly liked and worked with during her life -- for example, her spindle. Furthermore, after having buried the dead person, they light small fires for several nights so that the spirit can find the way it has to travel in its passage to the other world and will not be inconvenienced by losing its way, an inconvenience which might lead to trouble for its relatives.

On the other hand, when the Guajiro Indian has emigrated from his country for various reasons, especially in times of extreme summers when poverty becomes felt in an alarming way, and falls ill on foreign soil, his great concern is the need to return to his native land as soon as possible in order to die there and be buried in the cemetery where the remains of the ancestors of his family group lie. This concern, which could be interpreted romantically as a sentimental one, a simple manifestation of homesickness, has another explanation, more sociológical and conscious, related to life beyond the tomb. This is that the Guajiro, whatever his social or family condition may be, is convinced that after his death he will have to travel a long way

[79 cont.]

764 before arriving at the abode of the spirits, a route that would be
775 most difficult, practically impossible, to follow if he had to set off from some place that was not the special cemetery of his group; and above all he fears that all the indispensable ceremonies required for the success of his post-mortem travels may not be complied with.

775 These facts show us their belief in the active influence, the continuity of life of the individual after his physical death in a spiritual form. It is precisely this belief in life beyond the grave which shapes, directs, and controls the activities in the life of the Guajiro in innumerable circumstances, as we have previously noted. To corroborate this, we single out some of this behavior which is directly connected with the spirit of the dead.

Return of the dead. One of the stories we obtained during the expedition to La Guajira was recounted by the same informant who supplied the data about the sacrifice of children in the making of magic arrows; she stated that when she was a little girl she went one morning with her sister, also small like herself, to look for some [80] burros that had been lost. They searched all through the day without finding them and at last decided to take the road back home. It was already late when the children turned their steps toward their home, from which they had traveled a considerable distance. The sun was already setting when in a small stream bordering on the forest they saw their grandmother, who had died some time previously. According to the story, the old lady was bathing and was accompanied by a boy. The girls, in order to find out if it really was their dead grandmother, asked her several questions to which she did not reply, an evident sign that it was her spirit that had recovered
775 its bodily form. (One can infer from this part of the story a
787 characteristic of the spirits of the dead, which is their inability to communicate directly with living people by speech; these communications only occur in the Indian's dreams when his spirit, also freed from his body, can take advantage of this condition.) The girls returned home and asked why they had seen their grandmother if she was dead. The reply they got was

[80 cont.]

775 the following: "Because there are going to be more deaths in
787 the house."

In this story we can appreciate three very clear facts in relation to the dead: 1) that these can return to the bodily form they had when living ; 2) that their presence is an omen of coming misfortune as it announces the death of some member of the family, especially of the closest relatives; 3) that, as we have already noted, the spirit is incapable of communicating with the living by word of mouth.

151 The blind belief that the Guajiro have in the apparition
775 of the dead in bodily form is due, according to the investiga-
787 tions that we were able to make in part, to a psychological phenomenon: It is clearly seen in La Guajira, and the natives so recognize it, that people do not want to look at a dead person's face. This is owing to the fact that this face will be engraved very deeply on their memory, to the point that when the individual who has looked at it is traveling by road at night, or when it is getting dark, or when he is alone at night in his dwelling and worried, on opening his eyes he will clearly see the dead man in the form he had when alive. We therefore believe that what happens in this case is that the individual is obsessed with and has firmly strongly impressed on his mind the decomposing face of the dead person that, as we have said, stays strongly impressed on his memory through this same act. This observation of ours does not apply exclusively to Guajiro [171] Indians or to other primitives. It is also very common among the town people of practically all the regions of Colombia which we have visited. The psychic phenomenon of obsession and then the almost perfect reconstruction of the image engraved on the memory is a common occurrence among them. But if [81] we add to this the Guajiro's collection of beliefs related to the dead and the fear of the apparition of spirits, which are always harbingers of misfortune (death, sickness, misfortune in general), we can understand how a person so obsessed reconstructs in his nervous state the previously impressed image and, in his imagination, gives it a body. The effects of fear are then translated into a seemingly real image of the dead person, and the

[81 cont.]
158 individual is not capable of distinguishing between the merely
775 fictitious, the imaginary and the real. To him, the image so
787 faithfully rebuilt in his imagination is as real as the living
image of the deceased. The explanation of the phenomenon,
then, according to his mentality, is that the dead man has appeared
before him for some reason or other.

775 This fact is complicated in addition by the belief that
every dead person "retraces his steps," that is, he treads again
all the paths he traveled during his life; he returns to places
where he had been at different times; this is why he is "felt"
very often. Many times the individual feels the presence of
the dead, even if he does not see it. This Guajiro belief is
[171 also found to be very prevalent in all Colombian folklore. The
538] phenomenon that the Colombian people call "retracing his
steps" corresponds exactly to the Guajiro version which we
have just transcribed. Of course, according to popular legends,
the dead "retrace their steps" when they are dying or a few
[787] moments or even days before their death. To hear strange noises
without apparent logical explanation, to see shadows, etc., are
for the people evident signs that one of their relatives or friends,
or even some person who in the past has lived in these parts,
is dying or will die from one moment to the next. For the same
reason they avoid walking alone along certain places when they
know that someone who has lived there is close to death's door.

Degrees of danger in spirits. The Guajiro murderer suffers
682 a double punishment; first, the claim for compensation payment
775 for blood presented by the dead man's relatives, which involves
his own death if he does not pay the sum agreed on; and second,
the constant presence of the dead man's spirit, which never leaves
him. For this reason, the murderer cannot enter a home where
there are small children because the spirit of the dead man follows
him, will climb over them, squeeze them, and make them
[753] cry. If the children are sick, the murderer's presence is even
more dangerous because the spirit will rapidly cause their death.
If they are well they usually become ill. [82]

The death of a fellow being becomes a tremendous obsession
with the Guajiro; the murderer is convinced that the
[753] dead man's spirit follows him everywhere. When he is ill he has

[82 cont.]
682 nightmares and dreams, possibly in the delirium of fever, so
775 that the spirit creeps around him and painfully crushes his chest.
753 It pursues him insistently, which provokes a grave crisis in illness.
The spirit then takes advantage of his weak state to aggravate
his sickness. Self-confession is one of the most important
social consequences of this state of mind as, due to the obsession
682 with the presence of the spirit, every time a murderer has been
626 able to conceal the secret of the murder and in consequence has
so far escaped the compensation payment for blood, he loses his
equanimity during sickness and will then talk freely about his
crime. In the delirium of fever, haunted by the anguish caused
by the supposed weight of the spirit of the murdered man on his
chest, he raves about all the details of his crime. This confession,
according to his belief, does bring him some relief as in a
certain manner it admits the dead man's vengeance and in consequence
it gives some peace to the criminal as well as rest to
the offended spirit.

775 The spirits of those who have died violent deaths fall, so
to speak, within a class of more highly dangerous spirits than
those that die from natural causes. They represent, we should
say, the middle point between these latter spirits and those of
[768] suicides. This is certain to such a point that the house in which
a native has been killed is immediately vacated, because his
spirit will live in that house and it will only leave it on occasions
when it goes to torment the murderer. A Guajiro Indian will
never pass by the place between sunset and dawn because he is
convinced that every detail of the scene of the tragedy is continually
being repeated in that place ; the insults are heard again,
the shots or whir of arrows, the sighs and groans of agony, just
as were heard on the day of the tragedy. In addition the spirit
appears in the shape of a flame that pursues whoever may be
near the house; or it may also appear in the form of any animal
whatsoever, a bird, for example.

But the highest degree of danger occurs when the spirit of the murdered Indian is face to face with his murderer. This is a wounded spirit and full of desire for vengeance to such a point that the family of the murderer, after having fulfilled the

[82 cont.]

775 formalities agreed upon with the victim's family, find that it imposes on them a sort of punishment, a rhythm of life totally different from that to which they were normally accustomed and which can be interpreted in two ways: (a) as a purification rite; (b) as a change of personality, in order to avoid the mortifying presence of the spirit face to face with the murderer. [83] To us the second interpretation appears clearer and more acceptable as we do not know of any other rites of purification in La Guajira which can show reason for the first assumption.

682 783 A repentant murderer, according to the statement collected by our colleague and expedition companion, Licentiate Milcíades Chaves Ch., is punished by his own will as well as by the decision of his family through norms imposed by his uncles and aunts. He voluntarily submits to them so as not to commit a second time the same delict which constituted his own ruin and that of his family, who like himself are liable to become victims of the retaliation of the murdered man's relatives in revenge for the murder. This punishment is executed in the following way:

1) The murderer must spend five or six days hiding in the selva or some distant mountain.

[262] 2) He must take no solid food. He is only allowed to take hot drinks or very thin mazamorro (corn chicha), and water.

3) He must not speak to anyone and must be on the alert all the time, with his rifle ready to defend himself from his enemies.

4) He must disguise himself: cut his hair, wear special belts and fringes, and wear a robe, black in color. (This robe is so small and short that it barely covers the top part of his body.)

[513] [775] 5) In the forest he must sleep on the ground at night. Above all, he should not sleep face upward because the soul of his victim may climb into his mouth and press on his chest, even to the extent of killing him by asphyxia. He may only return to his home for a short time to rest in a hammock, but this must be so small that he cannot lie comfortably on it, and due to this inconvenience he is unable to sleep for long.

[231] 6) He must eat and sleep very little and be continually alert, having for his only companion a dog, whose senses will warn him of the approach of danger.

682 783 [83 cont.]
warn him of the approach of danger.

7) He must abstain from all business and renounce friendships for some years, avoid social gatherings, especially those of a festive or drinking type.

8) In the case that the two family groups — that of the murderer and that of his victim — do not come to an agreement he, the murderer, must leave the country of his own free will and go to some distant place.

If the murderer should not comply with the requisites indicated, he can be certain that the spirit of his victim will deliver him defenseless into [84] the hands of his enemies, who will immediately kill him to satisfy their vengeance.

We can clearly see two essential things that stand out from these facts: (a) that the murderer, by the social crime he has committed, places himself automatically in the condition of an outcast, one impure, or more correctly, a contaminated, dangerous being. For this reason he becomes an individual who [614] must be set apart from the community. (b) The murderer's family, at the same time that it provides him with the means for going away, carrying out one of its main functions, mutual assistance among its members, takes care that the outcast does not fall an easy prey to his victim's spirit. His retirement from his habitual haunts, from his acquaintances, and particularly 682 785 from his own relatives; his disguise by cutting his hair and wearing certain articles of clothing; his not sleeping in a hammock; his avoiding his face being seen (sleeping face down); his not mixing with friends in business and in social gatherings; and finally, his going away a long distance from his clan, all demonstrate clearly to us that what the murderer is endeavoring to do — consciously or unconsciously — is to effect a total change of personality, we should almost say that he tries to convert himself into another hypothetical person, unrecognizable especially to the spirit of the person he has killed, to avoid its discovering him and taking its revenge on his body.

The clearest demonstration that the change of personality is made to mislead the murdered man is the fact that only when it is found impossible to reach an agreement between the two

[*84 cont.*]
682 family groups — that of the murderer and that of the victim —
775 is it considered necessary for the murderer to flee to distant
parts to avoid the vengeance of his enemies falling on him. We
have here, then, a repetition, different in form but essentially
the same, of a disguise to avoid the presence of the spirits,
[171] which the Witoto practice either in the father, the mother, or
the child, with the object of protecting the child from the
malevolent action of the spirits (Cf. "Sickness and Medicine").

Presence of the dead in dreams. The dead person can also
787 reappear through the medium of dreams. He is then as real, as
769 alive, to the Indian as in his apparition during the day or night
in a corporeal or other form, such as we have shown throughout
this chapter. For this reason, when an Indian dreams of one of
his dead relatives on any occasion, he believes that this relative
is in need of something in his other world and requires [85]
special help from his relatives. He therefore assembles the dead
man's closest relatives, and they all go as soon as possible to
the grave of the person who appeared in the dream and take
a little food with them. After some time passed in lamentation
over the tomb, they unwrap the meat expressly taken there for
the occasion and seat themselves on the grave, prepared to eat,
saying as they begin eating, "Come then, let us all eat together."
To avoid the appearance of spirits through dreams, it is a general
custom to visit the graves of the dead at times of full moon
[*luna clara*], at night, and on the anniversary of the person's
d[illegible]h.

The explanation of the spirit's appearance in a dream can be found very clearly expressed in the words we quote from Dr. Born and according to which "... from experiences in the world of dreams he derived the belief in the soul as a clear explanation of the consciousness of "ego," which is opposed to the destiny of death." According to this, in the dream communication is established between two spirits, between two souls, as Dr. Born says: that of the dead, already definitively free of its human wrapping; and that of the living, momentarily free of its body by the effects of the dream.

766 *Burial and children.* When the first-born of a Guajiro mar-
riage dies before other children are born, they place it in an urn

[85 cont.]

766 head downward, and then they cover it with a piece of another
clay olla, new, usually with a base. The urn is buried in the
[834] woods at the foot of a special tree called in Guajiro huruwá
("within us," etymologically), with the idea that the other chil-
dren that are born will not continue dying. No special ceremony
accompanies the burial of the child, which must be carried out
by the maternal uncle, since neither the father nor the mother
may be present because it is believed that if they should be all
their other children would also die as they were born.

When the first-born dies, and the work of its burial has
765 been complied with, the mother is put through the following
766 procedure: She is hung in a hammock for three days in a
closed room (it is really a small house made especially for the
purpose). After three days have passed, she is unslung from the
hammock, but she has to continue in seclusion for a further five
[834] months (five lunar months), and the husband is prohibited from
visiting her, with the idea of avoiding sexual contact. After
this seclusion the husband may return, and they resume normal
married life. During the time she is in the hammock, the
[262] woman is not allowed to receive any food except a medicine
called hawapi, which serves for fattening. This medicine is a
[278] mixture of scraped roots dissolved in cold water [86] and is drunk
after being strained. The wife receives this medicine from her
mother, who acts as her nurse.

In other words, the mother, by reason of the death of her
[881] first-born, has to repeat the complete cycle of seclusion as at the
initiation of young women when they reach puberty. The cere-
monial is the same, seclusion, taking of fattening medicine,
sexual exclusion of the man, and in general all contact or rela-
tions with him, etc.

If in spite of these precautions the next child should also die,
764 the previous cycle is not followed, but the baby is buried with
all due ceremony. A fiesta is arranged for the burial, a wake is
held with the usual distribution of liquor, and animals which the
maternal and paternal grandparents supply are sacrificed. The
mother undergoes a new special treatment but without those of
seclusion.

[86 cont.]

In these magic practices we can observe the following
766 facts: 1) The burial of the first-born infant face downward in a
751 funeral urn prevents succeeding children dying in the same way.
If he is buried face upward, the future children will all unfailingly
die. The spirit of the child is, then, like that of all other
[775] dead adults, a spirit capable of doing harm, but its influence
can be easily counteracted by varying the normal position of the
head at the time of burial. 2) There is here the intervention of
a special tree, the huruwá, the reason for which is at present
unknown to us but which presupposes its possessing certain magic
properties, as it is below this tree and no other that the body of
the first-born must be buried. 3) The presence of the father or
of the mother at the moment of burial would cause the death of
their future children, which corroborates the above statement
[775 that the spirit of the dead, even that of the newborn child, by
842] its death makes its influence felt in the matter of conception,
as we have seen in other cases. (Cf. "Magic and Sacrifice" and
"Sickness and Medicine"). 4) The mother has to undergo or
relive the ceremonial of the initiation rite as this, which is also
directly connected with magic, prepares a woman for her life
as such. If we make an analysis we can presume or reproduce
the mental processes of the Indian in this case. If the initiation
rite has as its special function the preparation of the woman for
her place in society and in the family and if, in spite of it, the
first-born — which implicates one of her principal functions:
conception — dies, it must mean that the said rite was not carried
out in all solemnity, all and each of its [87] fundamental parts
were not complied with, and it is necessary to repeat them.
The mother of a dead first-born is placed then in the condition
of an adolescent.

* * *

858 We said in one of the sections in the chapter "Sickness and Medicine" that the child is regarded by primitives as a being defenseless up to a certain point, and that for this reason he needs

[87 cont.]

858 greater protection than the adult as, owing to his limited defensive capacity, illnesses can readily take possession of his body. We made reference in that section to the malevolent action of certain animals as well as the influence of the dead, the contamination exercised by their spirits on conception and on small children. And now we return to refer especially to this last aspect. We also saw how the harmful effects of animals centered especially on unborn infants due to carelessness on the part of pregnant mothers or of the husbands, and this is repeated equally with regard to funerals.

[764] When the grave destined for a dead person is opened, small children who go to the funeral, relatives of the deceased, must pass in file over it with the object that death will be delayed and will not overcome them while very young.

843 When speaking of sacrifice (cf. Chapter III) as well as
753 when speaking of medicine among the Guajiro Indians in its magic aspect, we quoted the general belief in La Guajira, which
[171] is known also as an aspect of folklore in various parts of Colombia, among them Santander and Nariño, that if during pregnancy, the father or the mother of the child to be born has been present at the exhumation of any human remains, the child will be born sickly, will suffer from diarrhea, night sweating, paleness, and loss of weight. The characteristic of something touched by death which the corpse has makes it contagious and, so to speak, contaminates the mother of the infant, who because of his weakness is incapable of resisting its influence. If in this case one considers the folklore aspect, the explanation which is given is that the cold of death has affected the child through the person of its mother or its father in the presence of the corpse. The explanation in the case of Guajiro appears to
755 us to be somewhat more complicated, as we had occasion to show above, although the curing processes tend in reality to extract the cold of death from the body of the child after it is born. The method of curing considered infallible by them is to bury the child in the still warm carcass of an animal sacrificed [88] during a wake, and only when there is no such possibility do they make use of the substitute, the bone, or of burying

[88 cont.]
755 the child in the warm sand, covering it to the base of its head.
There is a decided magic intervention, the effect of which we
[782 do not know on the part of the sacrificed animal which, as we
825] have said, shares the contaminating quality of its dead owner.

Other beliefs which confirm what has been stated are the
843 following: The husband of a pregnant woman should never, for
845 any motive whatsoever, dig a grave or assist in the construction
of a vault for either a primary or secondary burial ceremony,
because in such a case his wife's delivery will not be normal;
it will be prolonged with danger both to the mother and the child.

Neither should the mother-to-be watch a burial being placed in a vault because the previously mentioned phenomenon will be repeated: She will have a difficult delivery, through delay in the birth and pain.

783 Anyone who has touched a man whose death was not due
753 to natural causes must not come near a sick person because if
764 he does the sick man will quickly die. This also applies to those
who have helped in an exhumation or taken part in any of the
ceremonies called for by the secondary burial. Neither should
such a person go near small children because these will, according
to Guajiro belief, automatically begin to cry and twist about,
the victims of some sickness.

In general terms, the individual who approaches a corpse, who touches it, or who participates directly in the different ceremonies relating to it becomes contaminated. But he does not suffer the consequences of this contamination in his own person, unless it be a pregnant woman; he takes on the role of transmitting agent. He becomes an intermediary, if we can so call him, between the spirit and children, sick people, or pregnant women, which are the three classes of people preferred by the spirits of the dead on whom to practice their malevolent contaminations. In all three cases the weakness of the contaminated person is evident: the sick person, the child in the womb unable to defend itself, and the newborn also incapable of defending itself against the spirit as it shows in contrast to the other members of the community, that is, the adults on whom it depends for its

[88 cont.]
753 subsistence and in general for every aspect of its life.

764 The relation spirit-sickness-death, which we have re-
783 ferred to in previous sections, is corroborated by this class of beings exposed to the harmful influence of the spirits almost in the same sense as that in which science regards sickness, i.e., the greater the weakness the greater the possibility of contamination from pathogenic germs. In short, [89] death occurs more frequently among old people and children than among adults. It is only that pathogenic germs, or the various causes of sickness among the Guajiro, are reduced, due to their mentality and in the majority of cases, to one cause only, *wanurú*, the spirit of sickness and death.

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[91]

VI

Magic Charms
(Fetishes, Amulets, and Talismans)

789 As these three terms, fetish, amulet, and talisman generally lend themselves to confusion, we wish to clarify the meaning of each one before we proceed further with the subject.

Amulet "indicates an object that possesses the magic, passive quality of defending the wearer from malignant influences..." (56)

Fetish derives from the Portuguese *feitiço*, corresponding to the Latin word *facticius* ("made by hand"), and at first was used to describe Christian amulets, but was used by navigators in the fifteenth century to describe the primitively carved wood and stone which were worshiped as bearers of magic forces by the Negroes of West Africa. The fetish "*is an efficacious charm whose supposed action is guided by the wish of its owner.*" (57)

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56. Castiglioni. *Op. cit.*, VI, 87.

57. Born. *Op. cit.*, 2-3.

[91 cont.]

789 But in our opinion this definition would be incomplete if we did not add that fetishism implies a special cult, a veneration on the part of the owner. The fetish becomes almost the material representation of a personal and protecting divinity.

The talisman, in turn, "exercises an active magic influence, given that it can give fortune or success to whoever carries it." (58)

58. Castiglioni. Op. cit., VI, 87.

The difference between the last two, which apparently could be confused with each other, is the following: The fetish is a magic article which is at the disposal of its owner, who can use it to obtain his personal good or to do harm to others. On the other hand, a talisman is independent of the will of its owner. Its function simply consists in providing him with "fortune or success."

[92] This clarification having been made, we proceed with our study of magic in the life of the Guajiro Indians.

177 The general term contras ["charms"] in La Guajira and in
789 the greater part of Colombia covers those magic objects which can be included in the three categories we have just noted. These are not peculiar to any determined racial group but belong to the people, this being understood in its widest meaning. These charms are equally appreciated by an Indian, a Negro, a mestizo, or a White, and for this reason they are found in almost all the social and spatial spheres of Colombia.

But what is the most interesting as a social phenomenon is the symbiosis that has occurred. What is Negro, what is Spanish, and what is Indian are so closely linked, so perfectly amalgamated, that it is now little short of impossible to determine the origin of the different influences in many of the aspects of magic and of popular sorcery, to elucidate what has an African, an Amerindian, or a peninsular origin. All these ethnographic elements which at a historic moment formed an integral and essential part of the cultural basis of the different communities have been converted, thanks to the racial and cultural intermixing, into the elements of folklore of these new peoples that have arisen as a result of such crossing.

[92 cont.]

177 The previous statement is borne out to such a point that
789 even in native communities that are quite homogeneous, anthropologically speaking, as is La Guajira, it is difficult to learn which beliefs, which practices of magic or of sorcery, are autochthonous and which are acculturations due to contacts with the neighboring mestizos who, given the circumstances we have noted of being in the greater part mulattos, have a considerable collection of this type of beliefs and practices inherited largely from their Negro ancestors.

As it is totally impossible for us to make a list of the origin of all and each one of the autochthonous Guajiro beliefs, we shall have to confine ourselves to showing the similarities which they have in the whole of Colombian folklore. It is clear that this similarity will not always indicate acculturation, but only similarity due to the influence of other native groups that have disappeared but who once lived in Colombian territory, or exact beliefs which reached there from other continents and which can only be explained by the general evolutionary process of human mentality.

789 Characteristics of charms. 1. Some charms can be lent by
their owner to another person, if both the owner and [93] the
[426] borrower are of the same sex and if the charm is to be used by
the borrower so that he may benefit by its virtues.

[262] 2. To make use of them, the individual during the period of action must submit himself to a special, very strict diet. The breaking of any one of the norms will cancel the effect and bring about serious prejudice to health, if not results contrary to what he had looked for and expected. The way to carry out this diet will be found described in the following section, "Application and Effects."

3. It is sufficient for a stranger to look at the magic object belonging to someone else for all its magic power to be transferred to him. For this reason it is an indispensable requisite to keep it safely from other people's sight and always to be wary of this type of violation.

438 4. It is very difficult to obtain a true charm because while
789 those who sell these are old women very practiced in this art,
673 many unscrupulous women often devote themselves to the trade

[93 cont.]

458 in charms, which usually have no magic value and are a com-
789 plete fraud. These women are accustomed to putting in a small
673 wool bag something that has the appearance of a charm and
selling it as the legitimate article.

832 5. A love charm is worth about 300 Colombian pesos, and
435 just the loan of it for a few days to a friend for him to get the
426 desired results is paid for. Such a temporary loan is worth 100
Colombian pesos.

832 6. Besides the love charms which are strictly Guajiro,
[791] there are others that the so-called "Gocha" women sell. There are many of these women in Maracaibo and Zulia. Unfortunately, we could not obtain any special data about these makers of magic charms, of whom there are many on the eastern borders of La Guajira.

7. The charms serve equally for either sex; what varies is in general terms the effects of the charm.

8. Some personal objects, such as hair, sandals, etc., may form the basis of a love charm of great magic potential. This potential is above all due to the possession of a part of the personality of the person whom one wishes to harm.

9. Different love charms can be mixed together.

10. Charms may be acquired among civilizados. This kind of magic material is carefully kept in glass containers made especially for this purpose. [94]

Love charms. The Guajiro Indian, man or woman, knows and uses different charms to attract or repel love. They have them of different classes as regards form, preparation, and raw material. Some of them are the following:

a) One has the shape and general appearance of the excrement of the machorro, (a species of lizard). It has been stated that one of the magic objects used by the shaman is a small wool bag containing a paste prepared by a herbalist that is in the shape of goat excrement and is used to attract the spirits.

b) Another, which is kept inside a small glass receptacle, looks like a stone and is accompanied by some small pieces of coral.

c) Another is made in the following way: The root of a herb, very abundant on Itojoro Hill, is ground and [the paste]

[94 cont.]

832 made into a ball. This paste is dissolved in the water that the person wishing to profit by its powers uses in his bath, or some other way which we shall see later.

d) Also considered a love charm is the string of necklaces made of small pieces of coconut shell and worn as ornaments by the Indian girls.

[426] e) A thing that is very commonly used as a love charm, especially by girls, is their own hair.

f) With the hair which has been taken from a girl when her first menstrual period occurs and mixed with hummingbird's blood, dog's tail, and achiote [bija], they make a love charm which has a most powerful effect on the girl to whom the hair belongs. The man who acquires it can consider himself virtually her owner.

g) Lastly, an element that enters decisively in the effective value of love charms is achiote powder, which should be rubbed on certain parts of the body of the owner of the charm when he or she wishes to attain a certain end.

Application and effects. When a woman makes use of a love [262] charm which will give her the power always to be attractive to her husband and to regain his lost love or to win it, she should not eat any roasted food while she is trying to apply the qualities of her charm. She must also take the charm and rub it all over her body when she has recently given birth to a child or during her menstrual period. It is then that she should deny herself all [262] roasted food (meat, roasted corn, etc.) on which there has been direct action from fire. She should also abstain from all [95] kinds of milk, should not go out in the sun, and should not let her face be seen by another woman. This last point is very important as if this should happen the effects she seeks will be obtained not by the person following the indicated regimen but will [834] automatically be transferred to the woman who has seen her face. The woman who is owner of the charm must also abstain from cohabiting with her husband. When she bathes, she must do so not in the brook but inside her own home. The bathing must be done by another woman, starting at the crown of her head, then her shoulders, then her breast, and thus on to the whole body.

[95 cont.]

832 Once she has finished her bath, she must hang up her dress over her hammock to dry, also inside the house. It is also necessary for her to apply achiote powder to certain parts of her body, such as under her arms, on her breasts, on her genital organs, etc., with the object of aiding the magic action of the charm on those parts, and avoiding the loss or lessening of the magic power. This special regimen must be carried through for four consecutive days, at the end of which the effect has already been obtained — or at least there is no longer the fear that it may pass to some other person.

In general, every man or woman who possesses a charm keeps his body (armpits, breasts, genital organs, etc.) permanently dusted with achiote powder.

The men also make use of the same charms as the women. The magic power of these charms enables them to obtain the wholehearted love of women without their own affections becoming involved.

881 When a young woman reaches the age of puberty, and her
832 first menstrual period arrives, a love charm is hung about her
neck during all the time that she is kept indoors and hanging
up in her hammock (ritual of initiation of young girls). This
charm will give her the quality of being admired and loved by
men. The plan in wearing this token is that when she leaves
her seclusion she will find the man who will buy her for a wife
[602] at a good price. The charm is hung about the adolescent girl's
neck by her mother or by a maternal aunt.

832 When a girl's mother or aunt finds out that she has not been happy in her love life, they obtain charms which will make her more lovable and desirable.

[826] Women should be very careful of their hair when it has
been cut after the appearance of their first menstruation because
832 if a man gets hold of it he practically becomes the owner of the
673 woman, for by mixing it with hummingbird blood, dog's tail,
and achiote he can make a charm which will act directly against
the owner of the hair. The man, with the firm intention of causing her harm, may show her the charm or better still may produce it when she has her back to him. [96] The woman because of this simple charm becomes madly enamored with the man

[96 cont.]

852 675 and is made foolish and boastful of the difficult position she is placed in.

This charm, capable of such mischief according to the belief of the natives, is used especially when a man wishes to cause some woman harm or to mock either her or her relatives.

754 432 578 Fortunately for women in general they have a way to scoff at, or revenge themselves on, the men who have been false and whose love they no longer want – only revenge. For such cases they buy a charm from the old Indian women who know of these things, a charm which they place among the clothing of the man on whom they wish to effect a malevolent action. Then they obtain an old sandal belonging to their victim and burn it. It is most important that the sandal should be old so
826 828 that the sweat of the man in question, as part of his personality, should have soaked into it.

With these two simple things, the Indian women affirm, the man loses his senses, he goes about as if stupefied, neglects his person, is a failure and a brutish person thereafter. So sure are they of this that they say that a mad Indian living in Nazaret is in that condition because of a charm like that we have just described after he had been one of the most elegant and well dressed of Indians.

832 Another love charm is used not to regain a man's love that has been lost but to retain affection that is desired; and as it is the woman's property – for evil against the man – this aims at making the man unable to take another woman. This charm, like others, is obtained from the old Indian women of the Sierra de Jarara, and it is made of carefully ground herbs to which they add achiote, an excellent substance for charms. The mixture is wrapped in a rag, or it is kept in a little wool bag.

The effect of love charms can be diverted to other purposes. For example, when a woman wants her husband to make her a special present she goes to her charm, picks it up, shakes it well, and looks firmly at it, at the same time asking for the desired object. The charm works, and the woman obtains what she wished for.

Necklaces of small perforated discs of coconut shell are transformed into love charms when the women experts in this

[96 cont.]
832 witchcraft have "whispered" over them, that is, when they
repeat over them a series of magic incantations which have the
object of giving them the power to make a man, or men, love
the owner [97] as she may desire, and especially her husband
when it is the case of a married woman.

We have seen in previous paragraphs how the hair of a
pubescent girl serves as a base for men to make magic charms
which can be used against the girl. But the hair of such girls
in different circumstances serves to attract men in general and
causes a woman to be looked on with such deference by a man
that he buys her to take as a wife at a good price. For this
[826 reason the young Guajiro woman, especially those of the Sierra
302] de Jarara, keep their hair when it is cut. At times to make the
action more effective and to obtain better and quicker results,
[237] they place it under a patch of cow dung. The association of
their hair with cow dung is founded on a socio-economic
phenomenon which we might briefly clarify.

556 We have seen repeatedly that wealth in La Guajira is
583 calculated by the number of heads of livestock that an individual
832 owns; and it can be observed how a wife in their social organization
is obtained by purchase. When the buyer is a rich
man he pays in heads of cattle or horses; when poor, in goats
and sheep. Hence it is clear every woman aspires to be paid for
in cows and in a greater number than those paid for other women,
as this establishes an advance in her social status. This is the
reason why she buries her hair under cow dung and not that of any
other animal. She has made a very primitive association but
[237] one that speaks for itself. It would appear that the magic attraction
is brought about by the dung, and the results desired are increased
if this is from the cow, the animal of most value in La
Guajira.

In any case, young women are most careful about leaving
826 their cut hair about where it could be picked up by another person,
and for this reason they guard it all their lives, giving it
in this way a sacred quality. This characteristic which we have
called sacred stems from the magic connection established by the
primitive between a person and the different parts of his body, to

[97 cont.]
826 which we have referred on various occasions in this work.

Hunting charms. We could only acquire data about the
224 type of talismams connected with the hunting of deer and rabbits.
The object of such a talisman is a double one; on one hand, it inculcates ability and quickness on the part of the hunter who possesses it; and on the other, it exercises a restraining action on the animal he wishes to kill, as [98] according to the native belief, it stops its flight and converts it into an easy prey for the hunter.

The charm for facilitating the hunting of rabbits is made
[824] with bejuco leaves, a plant known in La Guajira by the name of
átpana-pi (átpana = "rabbit"). The leaves of this plant, which are used for making the charm, are long and shaped like a cartridge, which gives them a great likeness to rabbit ears. Besides this, it serves as food for rabbits, which they like a great deal.

To make the charm, the hunter carefully collects the leaves, grinds them up, and with the resulting powder makes small pellets resembling rabbit excrement. One of these small balls is carefully tied with a thread and is placed in the middle of the tassel which adorns the hand guard they use when drawing the bow. The effect of the charm is directed against the rabbit, limiting its chance of flight and thus making it easier for the hunter to secure his prey.

The charm used in hunting deer is also made from a plant
[824] well known to the hunters. This plant, in form like the bejuco,
has wide leaves which shine like a mirror. It abounds in the
[192] forest and requires no special cultivation. In La Guajira it is
called supána-unú; (su = neuter; pana = "leaf," "liver"; unú =
"tree," "pole"; wunú = "remedy"). It is prepared in a similar way to that for hunting the rabbit and, as in that case, it is carried on the person of the hunter in the shape of small pellets
[192] which are tied to the hand guard of his bow. Once finished it
takes the name of sipi-iráma, (iráma = "deer"), and its object is to make the hunting of the deer easier by attracting it toward the hunter, who thus cannot fail in his shot. It also prevents the animal's flight, thus making it, as in the case of the rabbit, an easy prey.

[98 cont.]

224 237 It is very interesting at this point to emphasize the fact that these hunting charms, in both cases, take the shape of the excrement of the animal that is to be hunted. We cannot allow to pass unnoticed this constantly recurring presence of excrement in the matter of magic. Let us recall the fact which we have frequently mentioned that for certain umbilical illnesses in children they apply excrement; that to call up their protector spirits the shaman use talismans that are shaped like goat excrement; and young Guajiro women bury their hair underneath patches of cow dung in order that they may be bought for wives at a good price.

These phenomena make us think of a very important function of excrement in the Indians' belief in magic, a function that [99] we know about only in its external aspects, but its application does not surprise us even though its explanation still appears obscure.

773 One has to remember that the guano of birds, according to Guajiro myths, was what favored the spread of seeds and populated the country with nourishing and useful plants for man and beast. One of our informants recounted this part of the Creation in the following manner: "Then Mareiwa brought together all the *zancalargas* (wading birds), troupials, and doves in a flock. He pointed out the far distance and told them to go in search, and there they ate of the *iwaráya* (fruit of the cardon) and prickly pear. He ordered them to bring the fruit of the cherry trees, and Mareiwa made it rain throughout all La Guajira. Each dove went about spreading his droppings, and where these fell there sprang up all the plants which both the *wayú* (Indian) and thier animals could eat. So were propogated the cardon and cherry trees, and the earth was sown...."

751 726 579 *Charms for war.* This charm has the virtue of giving its owner complete bodily immunity in the fights which frequently arise between the various family groups. For this reason, before getting ready for combat, when on the way and in fear of a surprise attack, or when he goes to present a claim for compensation payment in the case of the violent death of one of the members of his clan, the Indian will rub himself all over with

[99 cont.]

751 the charm. He has two aims in view, to render himself immune
726 from harm from his enemies' weapons, and to acquire courage
579 and coolness in the coming fight. This type of charm is called
ranfa in Guajiro.

The evil eye. This is one of the beliefs which seems to us to
754 have been acquired by the Guajiro Indians through acculturation,
[177] as we have not found it in any purely native group but, on the
contrary, have found it very widely spread in all parts of Colombia, especially among the mestizos. We have personally en-
[171] countered it in the departments of Cauca, Valle del Cauca,
Tolima, Antioquia, Santander, and Magdalena. Without being
exclusive to Negro or Negroid groups, it is among them that this
belief is found with the greatest intensity and frequency.

175 The presence of Negroes in La Guajira is not due only to
563 racial mixing with the groups of mulattos of the coast but was
initiated in the centuries of the Colony as can be seen from these
notes taken from Father Julián: "Two evident and palpable
reasons came to me: practical reasons which because of my zeal
for the welfare of the Guajiro Nation and for the Monarchy I now
express. The first is their provision and use of [100] firearms
through their continual trade with foreigners; secondly, these
same foreigners have brought in Negroes and Negresses, and these
[563] have mixed with the Indian men and women who have bought and
kept them as slaves. The result is that not only is the number of
people in La Guajira increased but so also is the number of terrible races of Mestizos, Mulattos, Zambos, etc., who united with
the Guajiro will make this nation even more formidable and everyday more difficult to conquer." (59)

59. Julián, Antonio. La Perla de la América
[The Pearl of America], 2nd, XIV, 195.

754 Referring to this popular Santander belief, Juan de Dios
Arias affirms: "In our territory, for example, there is a very general belief that certain persons have the evil eye, and if they
should look fixedly and with evil intention at a child, in the
course of a few days the latter will be covered with pimples and
sore places which are difficult to cure. This evil influence is

[100 cont.]

754 also effective on birds, which die in a short time when they have the evil eye put on them. To protect the children they are [751] made to wear rings or bracelets made of jet beads, buzzard [chulo] bones, guache [a certain serpent] teeth, or male and female coral stones. They also avert the evil eye by singing three hymns over the sufferer.

771 "We also find this superstition in Spain. The physician Rodríguez López, referring to Galician superstitions, writes: 751 'Here, where the belief in the evil eye is so strongly held, it 751 is exceptional for a mother not to hang round her child's neck certain relics, herbs, horns, or other objects of all shapes and sizes, or at other times to sew them on to their children's clothes, or tie them to their wrists to protect them from the contagious effects of the evil eye.'" (60)

60. Arias, Juan de Dios. Supersticiones Populares [Popular Superstitions], pp. 265-286.

Besides this, in the study made by the Licentiate Panesso Robledo on Antiochian folklore we find the following:

"Not only country people but also city dwellers wear opals, nearly all imitation, to protect themselves from evil actions, and on their children's wrists they tie black beads, called jet but rarely genuine, to keep them safe from the evil eye, a universal superstition whose effects if they really occur are to be imputed to the phenomena of auto-suggestion or hypnotism." (61)

61. Panesso R., Antonio. Del Folklore Antioqueño [Antioquian Folklore], p. 25.

751 Leaving Colombian folklore and limiting ourselves to that 754 of La Guajira, we find there that jet is the best charm to protect 751 one from the evil eye, [101] which especially affects children. 823 This evil effect is not obtained if the person on whom it is 855 practiced carries jet on his person, since it has the property of counteracting the evil. According to the belief, when the evil eye has been cast upon a person carrying a piece of jet, this

751 [101 cont.]
823 breaks, thus counteracting the evil. In other words, the magic
855 action of the eyes is deviated toward the jet, which directly
754 receives the effect, so liberating its owner from it.

For the same purpose they also use a mineral called salta piedra ["jumping stone"], which is hung by a string from children's wrists. It is yellow and shining.

Pieces of coral, which the women use in their necklaces,
[777] bracelets, and anklets as ornaments and bringers of happiness, health, and good fortune, are suspended from children's wrists to forestall the evil eye and some other sicknesses. The mestizos who live in La Guajira wear it attached to their waists by means of a cord.

751 It is also very common to find, as a preventative of this
754 evil, "oxeye" seeds hung by a small cotton string from some
824 part of the body.

Also coconut shell in the shape of a little hand is frequently seen, a shape which is probably more effective made in jet.

754 The evil eye, according to native belief, is exercised by certain people who have a special power in their eyes which causes sickness in those they look at if these are weak, such as children and sick persons, but this harmful action is involuntary in the majority of cases, though some do knowingly use their power and put it into practice with the manifest intention of causing evil. The effects of these "eyes" also extends to plants and animals.

The sickness shows itself in the form of stomach troubles, diarrhea, vomiting, fever, and by general eruptions on the skin. Animals also sicken and die, and plants cease to develop naturally and in the end dry up.

Method of warding off the wanurú. Near native habita-
751 tions the owners place horses' skulls, which they say serve to
825 drive off sickness both in children and adults, as they have the effect of frightening away the wanurú. We believe that this attitude is closely allied to another native belief which convinces them that the neighing of horses frightens the spirits that
[484] wander on the roads at night. For this reason, when the Indians travel at night, as we saw personally, the horsemen always [102]

751 [102]
825 head the party, and these insist that the rest of the caravan who
[484] are riding on burros or are on foot follow them closely.

If the wanurú fears the neighing of horses, it is also afraid
in the presence of its skull. The important element in this be-
lief is that its appearance must date from the Post-conquest
period, since the natives did not have horses before that event.
It is thus a belief acquired through acculturation. Our hypothesis is
171 that it was introduced by the Negroes, as similar beliefs are
175 found in the mining regions of Antioquia, as we can show by
751 quoting Tomas Carrasquilla in his work La Marquesa de Yolombó
825 [The Marchioness of Yolombó], the plot of which is unfolded in colonial times in these regions. He speaks of the popular belief in demonic monsters, especially by the Negro slaves who worked the mines, and refers particularly to a special being whom the simple people named the pate-tarro [pata de tarro, "can foot"], "a giant who had only one foot of flesh and bone. If it were not that this great scoundrel was scared to death by skulls of cows, there would not have remained alive a single pawpaw tree in these mountainous cultivated lands."

The similarity is obvious: A cow's skull keeps away evil spirits and averts their wickedness. The difference lies in something of minor importance — one is the skull of a cow, the other that of a horse. The beings against whom they direct their evil are different by reason of mere accommodation to the cultural atmosphere in which the belief is implanted.

777 Charms for becoming rich. This charm is acquired, as are all others, by purchase from a Guajiro woman experienced in the matter. Almost always the owner of such a charm is a man who by means of its power has acquired considerable wealth, because his charm will not allow him to do any bad business; it counsels him on what operations he must accomplish, it points out to him the profits that he could obtain from certain financial operations, and, above all, it guarantees him success in whatever business he undertakes.

The charm is kept inside a small wool bag, and with it he keeps a gold bead and at times a gold necklace. The part of the charm that we might call nonmaterial is produced by the various

[102 cont.]

777 prayers and special acts of magic with which the charm is endowed by its maker to give it its magic powers.

Charms to obtain respect, prestige, and affection. These 789 charms, which are for male use exclusively, are much sought after by the local caciques and by the arbitrators in claims between two enemy groups. The popular native belief [103] assigns the possession of this type of charm to such men as have great influence over them, that is, their natural headmen or direct superiors, and they are convinced that the greater the personal influence or power of such a headman, so much greater is the magic power of the charm he possesses. Hence the efforts of every influential Indian to obtain a charm superior in such qualities to any that may be in the possession of his rivals.

The possession of one of these charms inspires respect in others who would never dare to conspire against its holder's life or character because the charm would protect him and would [435 556] cause grave danger to the offender. It must be remembered that the possession of this amulet implies a condition of considerable wealth as it is only obtainable at a very high price, a fact which definitively influences [the degree of] fear and respect due its owner, owing to the established social custom of relating the social status of an individual with his degree of wealth.

When the native owner of this magic charm has to leave home in connection with some difficult mission such as, for example, taking part in the negotiation of compensation payment or settling a payment between two groups who have become enemies for some reason or other, or when he has to mix with a considerable number of natives among whom he wishes to assure his personal prestige, or when he hopes to overcome some difficult situation, he locks himself in his room hidden from all outside onlookers, gets his charm, uncovers it, and, looking fixedly at it for a moment, he then lifts it momentarily in his hand and vehemently wishes that all the magic power of the charm will inspire and defend him in the adventure he is about to undertake. [262] He then replaces the charm and starts on the diet indicated for the charm to have its effect. He should not eat roast meat or roasted corn for a period of three days, or bathe, for should he do so he will become mad.

[103 cont.]

789 This charm is personal and nontransferable. If a person
who is not the legitimate owner should touch it, he has tó sub-
[262 mit to the diet just described or his punishment will be madness;
828] his character will be changed, he will have fits of anger without
apparent or justified cause, he will suffer from permanent
nervousness, and his mind will be come deranged. However, he
may look at the charm with the owner's permission without suffer-
ing any change in personality. It is useless to steal the charm as
it will give no aid to the thief but will remain faithful to its
original owner and will most likely cause harm to him who may
have appropriated it illegally.

As do nearly all charms, it has its special covering and is kept together with achiote in three successive bags which have been knitted from wool by [104] the same Indian woman who inspired the charm with its magic power. As a matter of fact it is not known of what the charm is made because it cannot be completely uncovered.

787 What is the quality it possesses that makes it so valuable?
789 The native belief insists that when the owner sleeps it makes him
dream what is going to happen to him down to the most insignificant detail. During his sleep it tells him who his hidden enemies are, what people wish to do him harm, where they will spy on him when he is traveling on the road, what difficulties he will encounter in the negotiation of an agreement, what words he should use, etc. The owner of the charm wakes up with a start, gets up immediately, quickly finds the charm, and taps it lightly, which averts all evil.

According to the Indians, the charm is like another person that is in every place where its owner is not; it knows the intentions of other people, deduces what is going to happen, and warns its master.

226 Charm for the sea. In Ríohacha one of the Indians who
751 assisted in fishing and the cartage of cargo to and from the ship at
the wharf wore, hanging from his neck, a piece of bark of a tree the species of which we could not determine. When we asked him the reason for the charm, he explained that he wore it to safeguard himself from the waves of the sea, that is, to avoid being drowned if some day he should fall into the sea.

[104 cont.]

226 Never again during our visit did we come across this type
751 of magic object, which leads us to believe that it does not be-
[177 long to the Guajiro cultural whole, but that it is due rather to
the influence of the mulattoes of the coast who, as is well known,
184] are extremely superstitious.

*756 *Charms used to call spirits*. The use of these charms, to
which we have referred on other occasions, is limited to shamans.
778 They use them to facilitate the arrival of their protector spirits
when they are in a curing trance or are carrying out any of the
functions related to their status. Up to the present we have not
arrived at a satisfactory explanation of their influence on the
spirits, but we might now bring together the few data we do have.
One of the female shamans who served us as informant and who
[776] came from the Sierra [de] Jarara possessed charms to attract her
spirits. She explained to us that as those spirits are assistants,
some to young shamans, some to old ones, the charms to facilitate
the arrival of their spirits are also of two classes: for young
shamans and the other for old ones.

The charm is made from the leaf of a plant called in Guajiro
[824] *morõno,* which is found in abundance on Itojoro Hill. A woman
expert in such articles makes them there [105] by grinding the
leaves of the plant to a paste and shaping this into a rounded form
which she keeps in a small bag of red thread. The larger ones
are reserved for the older shamans, and the others, combined with
some of the former, are for the younger.

778 *The guará or guale*. The *guará* or *guale,* difficult to find at
789 present, is a kind of idol made from solid gold or silver and of
[325] which only a few examples exist as they are no longer made. This
small idol is an anthropomorphic representation in fetal position,
[532] and it does not seem to be an autochthonous product of the
Guajiro as they themselves assert that these idols come from their
[173] distant ancestors, by which they mean the Arhuaco of the Sierra
Nevada de Santa Marta.

This fetish is known sometimes by the name Mareiwa, a divinity or spirit similar to the idea of God but which appears to be nothing else than the spirit of Rain, as we shall see further ahead (cf. "Mareiwa and Wanurú").

[105 cont.]

778 [402] The owners of this idol – that no one is allowed to look at – keep it jealously guarded in a coffer, from which no one can withdraw it. With it they carry out on certain occasions some curious rituals such as carefully washing it and then exposing it to the sun's rays. When the summers are harsh and long, they bathe the idol, which they say makes it happy, and they then can ask it to send rain.

175 174 The small number of these little idols and the ignorance of the natives regarding their origin makes us believe that they are a foreign element, at least with regard to formal representation, which we consider to be the product of acculturation. The possibility that these objects have come from the ancient Arhuaco is also very remote, as we have found no trace in the literature dealing with this group of anything similar to such small idols.

175 325 [428] Moreover, objects of gold are so few that at present they are restricted to necklaces, which are highly esteemed and inherited through the maternal line. But it appears that previously there were other golden ornaments other than the necklaces, as Ensign José Nicolás de la Rosa affirms that on a certain occasion "all the population of Río de la Hacha went to war against them, and the struggle was so fierce and bloody that the Guajiro asked for a truce, offering never again to act so treacherously toward the subjects of the King of Spain, and as a sign of this intention and as compensation for the death of Tomás (Quintero), they delivered to his Majesty [106] a two-headed golden eagle, the jewel being deposited as a hostage to assure the keeping of the peace in the Royal Treasury." (62)

62. De la Rosa, José Nicolás. Floresta de la Santa Iglesia Catedral de Santa Marta [Treasures of the St. Marta Cathedral], 2d., IV, 213.

174 778 Up to now we have not been able to discover the historic value of the small idol called guará or guale, and we continue to incline toward our first opinion that it is a product of acculturation.

[106 cont.]

782 424 789 Magic prayers. As a matter of interest we transcribe below without any comment the following statement we recorded: there are a few special prayers only known to certain natives, the verbal formula of which they sell at times to whoever may need it, on the understanding that these prayers will be used in all good faith and belief in their magic power, prayers that serve to cure whatever plagues may occur, and frequently do occur, in the cotton fields.

538 789 755 Magic charms in the oral literature. From the stories we were able to collect among the Guajiro natives relating to their daily life, there is one that has a clear connection with magic charms. It is the one which refers to the struggle of the Indian Kurîta-Páta, of Jarara, with some Kusina Indians who had come to rob him of his livestock. In this struggle the Jarara Indian was wounded in the thigh, and his cure was effected through a dream in which it was communicated to him that he should swallow a charm (a tuma, "a precious stone") and leave his wife to exchange her for a slave. Kurîta-Páta obeyed these injunctions and was cured.

We have then a new magic charm which has a medicinal function and which must be added to those we have already noted throughout this chapter. Its magic action is combined with a social act of great importance within the Guajiro community: that of a man leaving his own wife and replacing her [567] with a slave, descending thereby in the social scale, as there is a great difference in status between a free woman and a common slave or bond servant. A new magic object, the tuma, appears as the possessor of supernatural powers capable of warding off those evils that can overpower an individual.

789 Summary and classification. 1) What we have called magic charms [contras mágicas] in this chapter include three classes of known magic objects: fetishes, amulets, and talismans. [107]

2) All these possess in greater or lesser degree a magic power capable of working either good or evil.

3) Their action in the majority of cases can be controlled and directed by their owners, especially in the case of doing ill

[107 cont.]

789 to others, to those they wish to hurt.

4) But as a general rule these charms are designed to protect their owners from evil actions on the part of others; they are independent of their owners' will, and they demand a certain care and a special diet for their effect to be positive.

5) Objects that have become converted into magic charms can be used in two ways: to cause harm to a particular person or to bring happiness in some aspect of the normal spiritual life of the owner. It all depends on the special treatment given to the charm.

6) The Indians are convinced of the effectiveness of every kind of charm. Their existence and their value are so assured among them that it is difficult to find even one Indian who does not possess at least one charm, no matter of what type it may be.

7) The classification that can be made of these magic charms in accordance with the three essential types which we have specified at the beginning of this chapter is the following:

Amulets. 1) Those given to girls unhappy in their love affairs by their mothers or their aunts; 2) charms for war; 3) jet; 4) the *salta piedra* ["jumping stone"]; 5) coral; 6) oxeye seeds; 7) coconut shell in the shape of a small hand; 8) horse skull; 9) charm to acquire riches; 10) charm to acquire respect, prestige, and affection; 11) piece of wood hung round the neck to save one from the sea.

Fetishes. 1) Love charms to attract a husband permanently, reconquer his love if it has been lost, or to win it; 2) love charm to win women's love without falling in love; 3) those made by men with the hair cut from girls at the time of their first menstruation, hummingbird's blood, dog's tail, and *achiote*; 4) that used by women and accompanied by the burning of a sandal to revenge themselves on men; 5) that also used by women to retain a man's love or to prevent him taking another woman. [108]

Talismans. 1) The charm used by women at the time of their initiation — first menstruation; 2) those also used by women to induce their husbands to give them a certain present; 3) necklaces made of small disks of coconut shell; 4) women's hair interred in cow dung; 5) charms to aid in hunting deer and rabbits; 6) the *guará* or *guale*.

VII

Other Aspects of Magic

551 689 The name in magic. "The prohibition against uttering a dead person's name generally is quite rigidly obeyed. Certain South American tribes consider that to pronounce the name of a dead person in the presence of his living relatives is to inflict on them a serious offense, and they apply to the offender a penalty no less rigorous than that assigned to a murder . . . ," says Freud (63), and the Guajiro is typical in this respect. Let us see one by one the rituals followed with respect to the dead person's name when a death occurs in their community.

[553] It is imperative that every other person who bears the same name as the deceased should change it. This is done to avoid pronouncing that name in the presence of any of the dead man's relatives, because if this should happen the relatives are entitled to present a claim for compensation payment for the offense. The family considers that by mentioning the name of their deceased relative, the offender has renewed all the painful sorrow which they suffered at his death.

551 This change of names among those who are namesakes of a dead man is made for life and extends geographically over all the zone inhabited by the dead man's relatives and causes the same person at times to have different names. It is, at least, one of the reasons.

At the present time it is common among the natives for
[177 every person to have three names: one Spanish, taken from the
797] list of saints and given him by the priest at his baptism; a family nickname, by which he is generally known and which almost always refers to a distinctive physical or spiritual quality; and a third, intimate name, a secret for the majority of people and only known by its owner and some members of his family.

The personal name of the individual should never be
[689] pronounced by anyone but his close relatives. Whoever should

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63. Freud. Totem y Tabú.

[109 cont.]
551 say his name and not be a close relative must pay a sum de-
[688] cided upon [110] as reparation for this violation of the social
norm. Usually they demand in payment the delivery of several
head of livestock, necklaces, and other adornments. If the sum
[628] agreed upon by the arbitrators is not paid in due time, war may
be provoked.

551- When a girl is born, the father gives her a name which
553 may be the same as her mother's, that of her maternal grandmother, or, secondarily, that of a favorite aunt or cousin, or that of a much appreciated friend. But besides this name which is derived from family sentiment or a friendship of the father's, the girl will also have various capricious nicknames which do not necessarily correspond to natural qualities or defects in her psycho-physical personality or some special circumstance at her birth but can be any arbitrary name which may occur to her father, her mother, or her brothers [and sisters? hermanos] on the spur of the moment. So the girl may grow up with several nicknames, of which in the long run one will win out and be generally adopted.

But when the girl becomes a young woman, when her first menstruation appears and her complicated initiation ceremony is carried out, the changes she experiences in her biological functioning and her social standing also extend to the aspect of her name, and she will no longer wish to respond to the nickname by which she has been called ever since her infancy, but only to her new name, by which she will be known until her death.

551 From the above we note that in La Guajira a person's name is not used among the natives except in a very restricted sense, but on the other hand, the nickname which a person acquires when a child through the intervention of his parents or brothers [siblings? hermanos], is the true, the universal name, which may be used by all his countrymen up to the time of his death.

787 Omens. When a mountain cat [cougar] cries repeatedly
825 throughout the night near the house and remains a long time prowling about, it implies the approaching death of an inmate of that house. The behavior of this animal can become maddening, as at times it will repeat its patrolling and mewing for several

[110 cont.]

787 nights and even can persist in this habit for years.

825 If on successive occasions a person should meet a bat when on the road, it is a sign that he will receive bad news on the way or on arriving at his destination, or that there will be a mishap at the place toward which he is traveling. Furthermore, if during the night he frequently hears a bat, death is approaching some person he knows.

In the chapter "Sickness and Medicine" we have already seen the relationship existing between snakes and pregnant women and a series of facts which place [111] ophidians in an exceptional position in Guajiro mentality, by virtue of the fear that this reptile inspires in the individual through the number of properties, usually malevolent, which are attributed to it. To this we must add the quality of animal omen, because if at dusk or during the night they see the trail of a snake without being able to capture it, the first person who sees the snake itself the following day will suffer the loss of a member of his family or some other misfortune. This happened, they say, to one of the girls in the Nazaret orphanage. One evening they found signs on the patio of the passing of a large snake. The girls looked diligently for it everywhere without being able to locate it, as they were convinced that if they did not find it that night, the first person to see it the following day would have trouble. As a matter of fact, the girls affirmed, the girl who encountered it suffered the loss of her grandmother within a short time.

But in this matter of what we have called omens, it is the birds that have the greatest influence. We could therefore speak of birds of good or bad omen in La Guajira. These birds announce future events according to the position they take up in certain circumstances, which the Guajiro interprets in his own way in accord with certain traditions and fixed rules, which their actions give us to understand. These do not constitute, so to speak, a rigid code, a pre-established and fixed law, but are rather to a certain extent products of chance and the native's imagination, who seeks in all the accompanying circumstances, logical or no, the explanation of any phenomenon. Whatever happens to him in his life is never without reason or cause.

[111 cont.]

787 Someone must know about these happenings and will communi-
825 cate them at the proper time. From this they derive their belief in the announcement of coming events, which they interpret by associations related to certain animals in certain circumstances.

For example, the bird which we call the woodpecker announces to the wayfarer by its song that in the place that he is going to a misfortune will occur, there will be a drunken brawl, or simply that evil spirits live there.

We have already seen the malevolent action of the nocturnal bird which appears frequently in Nazaret and sleeps in the
[753] Sierra de Jarara. The Indians say that it flies over the houses during the night and in its droppings spreads the germs of bronchitis which are absorbed by children who contract the illness and die.

There is also a bird known in the peninsula named cucarachero ["cockroach bird"] — different from the one in the interior of the same name — which wanders over the roofs of houses searching for beetles, scorpions, and small lizards, etc. It makes its nest in trees near houses and frequently sings [112] when it is brooding or raising its young. It is known in La Guajira by the name of waimpirai. This bird and the one called uteté announce by their song when visitors will be coming to the house. The belief exists that these two birds hurry those who are on a journey and counsel them to be speedy so that no misfortune may befall them en route.

Another bird, the one popularly known by the name of alcaraván [bittern] and in Guajiro by that of karré, likes to walk about near the native houses and to go inside them. If at nightfall it should be going about in the vicinity of the houses, the Indians believe it announces the death of someone in the family. The natives' fear of this bird becomes acute when it is not content to move around the house or go inside, but goes into the cooking area and approaches the hearth, because in this case death will very soon carry off one of the members of that home. The creature suffers the consequences of the natives' fear since they drive it from the house with stones and blows.

[112 cont.]

787 Another bird of bad augury is the red owl. If a person
who is traveling by night along the road sees one and hears its
825 hoot, this is a signal that a misfortune is about to happen at the
spot the walker met the bird or that something will happen to
upset him on the road.

If at nightfall the long-drawn out song of the waimpirai
is heard, it is an indication that there will be a war between
two important clans, or extended families. They say in La
Guajira that on a certain occasion, after this omen had
occurred, a struggle between two families broke out and 20
[797 members of the Uriyú clan had to take refuge in the convent
628] of Nazaret, defeated by their adversaries who were hunting them
down wishing to kill them.

When a hen cackles at daybreak there will surely be a death in the house, particularly when the cackling is repeated on three consecutive days.

312 Natural phenomena in magic. The most important natural
132 phenomenon for the Guajiro is rain, the essential fount for his
133 agriculture and stock grazing and the basis of his present-day
economic organization. It is not strange that this is so because
if for every community and for living beings in general water
is an indispensable element and if many of the divinities and
spirits of the primitive Americans center around it, for the
Guajiro it is infinitely more essential if we take into consideration
the geographical milieu in which he lives and to which
we have referred, perhaps insistently, in this work as we consider
it of vital importance (cf. "Introduction"). In the whole
area there is no river or stream of importance. The soil has a
maximum permeability and has to withstand high temperatures;
[113] and as the Guajiro have no practical knowledge of the
conservation and distribution of rain water, they always live
dependent on the winter season for sowing their crops. For
789 this reason many acts of magic have this end in view, but as
this aspect will be better understood in the chapter on "Mareiwa
and Wanurú," or notions of good and evil, we will confine ourselves
in this section to noting some magic acts related to rainfall
and to other natural phenomena.

789 The intervention of the shaman, which we have lost
*756 sight of since the second chapter when we described at length
his personality and attributes, returns again to participate in

[113 cont.]
789 the propitiation of the rain, which is the culmination of the
*756 rituals of the Guajiro Indians.

When summer continues overlong and endangers the crops, animals, and the community in general, the shaman gets ready to call for and to attract rain. To effect this he dresses in the way we have seen him do when he cures sickness or casts out epidemics and begins to invoke up his protector spirits that they may aid him in his trance. He chews tobacco and rhythmically sways his torso and head while shaking his maraca. All these acts he carries out while seated on a wooden zoomorphic chair. He then commences to sing loudly to attract his spirits, and when he attains this he asks them to send rain. He tells them that men need it, that they are without food and without water in their wells, and they are near death through hunger and thirst, their animals are dying, and misery and desolation is overrunning their country. At certain moments the shaman goes out from the house where he is carrying out his ceremony and walks around it so as to attract the rain and scare away the evil spirits that are keeping it back. As a result of these ceremonies rain should fall.

789 But this is not the only method that the natives have at
178 their disposal to attract rain. The propitiation can be effected
in a different way without the intervention of the shaman. This is happening now in all the acts of magic in this society, which we may describe as being in a state of disintegration in which the prestige of the shaman has lost importance, and ordinary people have taken over his science. We shall see below a series of methods the natives employ to attract rain without the shaman's intervention.

789 For example, a kind of adoration is very common which
821 the Indians pay to a certain iguana that is found in the crevices
825 of rocks, especially in the cliffs of the seacoast, an adoration
that is shown in a series of fiestas and dances, the purpose of which is to obtain the favor of these reptiles, so that they may place no [114] obstacle in the way of the hoped-for rainfall but let it occur freely. We shall study this association iguana-rainfall more fully in the last chapter.

789 Other methods used by the Indians to attract rain during
821 summer are: beating their drums for many hours on consecutive

[114 cont.]

789 821 nights and repeating this at sunrise; or shooting their arrows — or a more modern procedure, their shotguns — toward the clouds to make them discharge their moisture. In the first case, it seems as if the drums endeavor to reproduce the sound of thunder during the storms that are usually associated with rain. The native believes that by creating one of the concomitant factors he will bring about the whole desired condition, that is, the production of the whole phenomenon; for him, thunder and rain are two equal and inseparable things, so by obtaining one he will automatically attain the other.

* * *

241 462 Men and women participate equally in sowing crops with a division of labor which corresponds to the combined magico-biological whole. The men have charge of preparing the soil and making the holes for the seed; the women do the planting and the covering up of the seed. They say that if the grain is planted by the woman, it will have a better chance of growing and developing, and the harvest will be more abundant. The woman is considered as a symbol of fecundity through accomplishing the gestation of the child, and that force she transmits to the seed at the moment she plants it.

* * *

789 821 During eclipses of the sun or moon the natives cry disconsolately because they fear that these heavenly bodies will not continue fulfilling their functions; in crying they implore them not to abandon them nor leave the world plunged in darkness. To oblige them to return to normal, the Indians shoot their rifles at them, and in the more remote areas of La Guajira they organize a great noisy shouting, crying and shooting their arrows at the sky, so that the new day will triumph.

* * *

When there is a great deal of lightning during the stormy season, the old Guajiro who still retain a great fear of this natural

[114 cont.]
789 phenomenon – organize, as in the case of the eclipses, noisy
821 groups who shout aloud, [115] begging the lightning to withdraw,
to go to the sea and make the storms that frequently lash the
coasts of Cabo de la Vela and Chichibacoa.

• • •

When the Guajiro is on the sea and, as frequently happens, his vessel becomes becalmed, he calls on the breeze to return by means of a long-drawn-out whistle, trying every pitch until he gets it to return.

• • •

821 Finally, if at dusk a considerably large, vividly red cloud
787 appears, the native believes that it announces that there will
shortly be a war between two clan organizations.

Magic and dreams. The Guajiro Indian looks upon his
787 dreams as revelations of the future. His mentality does not con-
813 ceive them as products of the past or as being associated with
certain psycho-physiological phenomena, but as previews of his life, as a way of seeing future happenings, as revelations made by the spirits of strange things that will happen to the person dreaming or to those that appear in the dream. These dreams are not, therefore, private personal phenomena but social events, as what they contain affects the entire community or parts of it and determines many of their individual or collective acts, since the Guajiro is always strongly linked to this phenomenon as he is to all other magic; and in this respect he is a determinist. His life, his social and economic activities, his relations with his geographic surroundings, his illnesses, birth and death are determined by this play of magic interactions. It does not
813 matter that the phenomena are not always repeated in the same way or that on many occasions the events expected to occur as the consequence of a certain concatenation of magic causes do not take place or do so in a different or even contrary manner to that expected; the native does not waver in his belief in that invisible but active force. He continues to be attached to it, as

[115 cont.]

813 to a faith or a creed. And only the presence of distinct elements in his civilization and contact with other human groups more advanced and rational (in our sense) is undermining the power of this force which, in great part, constitutes, regulates, and governs his way of life.

121 787 In this study which we present we are not interested in dreams as events tied to the psychic life of the individual, nor are we going to try to interpret them. [116] This is part of another work which will be presented later by other investigators. The phenomenon as such interests us, especially the interpretation the native gives his dreams as revelations of future events, of forthcoming happenings related to his own life, to that of his fellow beings in particular, or to the community in general. In other words, the magic act that denotes, as Thorndike states, "a mental state," a way of feeling and thinking, a method of explaining effects whose causes are unknown. We will, therefore, simply describe a series of dreams and their meaning to the native, without comments except in cases where we consider it strictly necessary in order to clarify certain situations or special institutions to which they refer.

787 But before dealing with this matter, we shall first make a subdivision of dreams into two categories, in accordance with their content, which we may describe as the real and the symbolic. The first would appear to be the work of special spirits who reveal themselves through the medium of dreams to give their assistance and protection to an individual in an almost direct manner: These dreams are so clear, so explicit, that they require no interpretation. They are like a conversation between the individual and the spirit in which the latter tells the former all the things he must do; for example, the herbs that he must take to cure a certain illness from which he is suffering. On the other hand, the other dreams do not have this direct relation but are detached from active reality. Their interpretation — usually made by the shaman — demonstrates phenomena of a socially determined character which should be prevented or hastened. These dreams are those that give rise to the series of ceremonies or rites leading to a conjuration, as we saw in the corresponding chapter.

[116 cont.]

787 If someone dreams that a certain person is dead, and he sees him in that state, it is because he will be seeing a steer killed in the near future; and vice versa if in the dream he is present during the sacrifice of a steer it means that a certain person, ~~who is then~~ identified by the interpreter of the dream, is going to be killed by violence.

If in a dream one sees a person who lives at a distance, it fortells that within a short time he will be seen; and vice versa if the person in the dream lives in the vicinity of the dreamer, it indicates that that person will not be seen for a long time, or never; in other words, he is soon going to die.

If someone dreams that he cares greatly for a certain person, and he sees himself making demonstrations of affection toward him, that person will no longer care for him, he will forget the dreamer [117] and completely ignore him. On the other hand, if the dreamer appears to be very disdainful of an individual and shows his feelings of dislike for him, it means that the person is going to care for him passionately.

When in a dream a person is going to be murdered, this means that someone of his group will die, not the person dreamed of but some other.

If in a dream he has the sensation (nightmare) that he is falling from the hammock in which he is sleeping, that is a sure sign that when he is dead those who are carrying his body to the cemetery will let it fall and crash to the bottom of the grave, when the social norm stipulates that the body of a dead person should be lowered carefully and slowly to its final resting place. Such an occurrence signifies that the bearers of the body held the dead man in little esteem. [764] [554]

A woman who dreams that she has, or that she will have, a daughter is convinced that this means that her honor is going to be defamed, that she will be involved in vile gossip and slander; people will say that men have abused her, and when they see her with a man they will say that he is one of the many with whom she has had illicit relations. But when she dreams that the child she will bear will be male, this is a sure sign of a putchi and that her family will be involved in an interclan war and will suffer

[117 cont.]

787 reprisals from their opponents. One of our informants, a married woman without children, told us that on one occasion she dreamed she was going to have a male child. A short time afterward, her group, the Uriyú, became involved in a fight with the Epieyú, who were much stronger; several members of her group were killed, others sought asylum in the Capuchin convent, and the majority emigrated to Venezuela in order to avoid greater disasters.

When the action of a dream represents the sacrifice of a steer, and the dreamer is accompanied by a person of a different clan, the interpretation given is that the dreamer will perish at the hands of one of the family group that appeared in the dream with him. During our stay in Nazaret we attended the funeral ceremony of a woman who was found dead one morning, seemingly hanged from a forked pole in the interior of her home. It was soon established that she had been murdered by her husband, who had brutally beaten her and who, to avoid punishment for his crime, had fixed her body to appear as if she had hung herself. One of the relatives of the dead woman stated after the occurrence that some days before the woman had had a dream similar to what we have just described.

Furthermore, to dream of convalescing from any kind of sickness indicates that the dreamer will suffer [118] from the
755 sickness dreamed of. To avoid this, he must arrange an exorcism, which consists of the celebration of the *fiesta* that would be given when a sick man has recovered from such an illness and has become convalescent, that is, a *chicha-maya* dance at which, at the expense of the man who would have suffered the sickness, *chicha* and meat are partaken of by all who attned.

With respect to the foretelling of interclan wars, which appears to be an obsession among the Guajiro Indians, in addition to what we have noted above, we have an indicator dream, when the dreamer sees a great flood of water washing away everything in its path, devastating everything that comes within its reach, and carrying the dreamer away with it. He, however, is able to save himself from drowning in the flood by grasping some plants growing on the bank or a log floating in the stream.

[118 cont.]

787 The meaning of this is that shortly there will be a terrible family war into which his own family will be drawn, but as he saved himself in the dream by catching hold of something, he has the conviction that he will likewise come through the war safe and sound.

The Guajiro is usually guided by his own experience when [312] making an excavation to find drinkable underground water for his own use or for his animals. But all too often when the spring of water appears after days of hard work, it has to be abandoned because the salinity is too high to permit the water to be used. It is traditional, however, that the Guajiro finds the best places for water through his dreams. The sleeper recognizes the place where he should excavate to find water, and with unshakable faith he puts into practice what he has dreamed. Naturally, by coincidence the dream at times comes true, but in the majority of cases this does not happen, yet this does not prevent the Guajiro from continuing to believe in his dreams.

If an Indian dreams that on walking abroad he meets a serpent which coils itself about some part of his body, it is a sign that he is, or is going to be, a very intelligent person with a facility for learning a language other than his own. If, on the other hand, in the dream he shows fear of the snake and runs away, that means he has no qualifications for learning and is mentally slow.

If he dreams of food in abundance, numerous troubles are approaching him.

If an individual dreams that after climbing a high hill, he finds himself on the summit, it is a symbol that he will live for many years and will die at an old age. [119]

If he dreams that he is tossed by a bull, it is a sign that in a short time he will have whooping cough.

Lastly, if a man is sound asleep, and he dreams that someone comes to the spot where he is lying and grips him firmly and thus wakes him up, the cause is none other than the presence of the *wanurú*, or the spirit of a dead person, that comes to visit him.

These examples of dreams, which do not cover the inifinite variety that occur among the Guajiro nor their diverse

[119 cont.]

787 interpretations, will suffice to show that the life of these Indians is built around natural and supernatural phenomena impregnated with a magic factor, and that it is difficult to separate them.

789 826 Other magical acts. The belief exists among these natives that to eat another person's leavings of food implies the acquiring of his qualities. Thus, if one eats the leavings of someone having white hair, one's own hair will become white. Women are therefore very addicted to eating food left by white women when they visit them because they want to obtain a paler complexion. It is also quite common among the men to eat food left by those who are distinguished for their bravery because by this they may acquire some of their courage. This belief extends to everything that may have contact with the person's mouth or breath. Cigar and cigarette butts have this same virtue. They also believe that if an Indian smokes a cigarette butt that has been thrown away by a foreigner, he will acquire one of the qualities of that foreigner — his beard.

778 789 This gives us a clue to the existence of what some authors have called mana. It is nothing more than a memory which shows itself in the magic phenomena we have been describing. The idea is not clear but it may be presumed to have existed in former times. Mana is a force that transmits qualities; it is both energy and vitality, which in spite of being intangible impregnates everything it touches. It can be absorbed or acquired in different ways, and from this we derive the explanation which has been given for cannibalism in some primitive tribes. Its concomitant effect is that it has led the Guajiro to keep one of the aspects of this idea: that food, and in general all objects that have been in intimate contact with a person who has certain characteristics, superior in the eyes of the native since he wants them and would feel more complete with them, bring him that force, that singular essence, through magnetization — permit us the term for its graphicness — which it has acquired by touching the possessor of such qualities. [120]

The object, or the food, has robbed, so to speak, a little mana from the individual who was in intimate contact with it.

* * *

[120 cont.]

843 There is another series of magic acts related to those recently enumerated, which also share the qualities of another individual but which differ from them in two aspects: first because they are indirect, that is, because the child receives them through his mother during the period of gestation; second because they are not so directly related with the notion of mana but could be included in what we might call phenomena of autosuggestion because they only consist of one sudden impression or a strong unsatisfied desire which causes anguish. Some of these are the following.

When a woman is pregnant and she gets a strong shock through the sudden apparition of someone, the child when born will have the same skin color as the person who has startled her.

On the other hand, if during her pregnancy, especially [845] during the early months, the mother should be greatly frightened, twins will be born to her. In this aspect regarding twins, there is also the belief that these are born when the woman has been [853] asked and has refused to give the breast to a twin child whose own mother was unable to feed it.

Finally, when during the time of her pregnancy a woman has a very strong desire to possess something, as for instance a dress, a necklace, any special or particular kind of ornament, and she searches anxiously for it but does not find it and so does not satisfy her wish, her child will be born under the influence of her unfulfilled desire and will carry on its face the dissatisfied look of its mother: He will have his mouth half open, an anxious look, and will be continually crying and upset. [121]

VIII

Magic as the Origin of the Theater in La Guajira
(The Dance of the Kid)

128 It may perhaps be overbold to use the title which heads this chapter, and this may even apply to the contents and the statements which we make in it, because here some concepts will be confused which could be treated separately, such as the

[121 cont.]

128 differentiation between magic and religion, and between play as such and drama. But these four things are so interlaced that it is not possible to take each one of these aspects separately for analysis or even for presentation. If the whole appears clear we shall be satisfied. Our intention in this study has been to present facts in the most objective manner possible without neglecting, obviously, to interpret at times when it has seemed necessary or when we have felt capable of doing so.

536 As we have said, whether what is presented in the Dance of the Kid is magic or religion, it is a matter that might lend itself to Byzantine discussions by which nothing of the subject would be cleared up. On the contrary, they would further confuse it and take away opportunities to make known one of the most interesting aspects of the spiritual life of the Guajiro, in which are broken many of their social traditions, or rather their everyday cultural patterns, and in which they have an opportunity to show their dexterity more than their capacity as actors, since it must not be thought that what we have described as theater is such in the true sense of the word but rather corresponds to the beginnings of that art, the beginning of representations, without finality in themselves but as propitiation of rain and good harvests, as integral parts of a complete ritual which includes dances, songs, and representations of natural scenes or incidents taken from mythology.

536 What has given us occasion to call this theater or, if one
prefers, drama is the concurrence in the representation of scenes
796 of a small number of the participants at the Fiesta, or Dance, of
the Kid and the presence of a great number of the other participants who fill the role of spectators. [122]

It also frequently occurs that each group that takes part
in the play is headed by a minstrel, or singer, who narrates each
event as it occurs; the language he employs is dramatic, and he
uses the most attractive turns of speech. The verbal music is added
to the drama though not in the form of massed choirs but is ex-
pressed by each of the leaders who guide the actions of the par-
[533] ticipants in the scene that is being represented. Unfortunately,
these songs have not been traditionally preserved but are rather
improvised for the occasion. Only the music has endured

[122 cont.]

536 796 unchanged, composed by some Indian, namely by an inhabitant from the Jarara district — which is the cradle of their poetry and their music, according to the statements of these same natives. They adapt the verbal part of the play to this music as the representation progresses.

The Dance of the Kid is celebrated when the rains arrive, when the ahuyamas, the watermelons, and the kidney beans are growing. It is practically a ceremonial rite by which they celebrate the beginning of the rains and the appearance of fruit. At this dance, which is celebrated at night and during consecutive weeks and even months, whoever wishes to do so joins in, since the invitation consists of the beat of the drum, a characteristic of these occasions.

535 796 There are two special dances which are performed in the following way: In the first, each Indian moves united with a female partner, in line one behind the other, and holding each other by the waist, they walk in the direction taken by the leading couple. The song which may go like this begins: "Lend me your partner so I may travel with her." They then make a turn. On doing this, the first Indian takes the partner of the second, and so on successively down the line. The dance continues with these turns and progresses forward until the first pair are reunited.

In the other dance each man takes a partner, an unmarried woman as a general rule. They take hold of hands, doing the same with the other couples that join in the dance. Once hands are grasped, they all walk in line but neither forward nor backward but to right and left. Then, hands still grasped, they run in circles, having the first in the line as the axis, until they fall to the ground impelled by the speed their racing around has given them; then they rise and start the dance over again.

796 The dance begins at about six in the afternoon and lasts until midnight. At this hour all the participants return to their homes but come back again on the following and every succeeding night until the cycle of the beginning of the rains, the collecting of the crops, or the ripening of the fruit has been fulfilled. [123]

The ceremony we have been describing has three special

[123 cont.]

796 aspects: 1) it shows ability in theatrical representations; 2)
dancing, such as we have described in previous paragraphs, accompanied by songs; 3) a very interesting sexual aspect, in
which the cultural patterns which govern Guajiro society are
[786] broken, permitting the possibility of a certain sexual freedom
without the consequences attached to such in normal times. We
will begin with this last aspect, leaving for later a discussion of
what their songs, plays, or drama really are.

Sexual aspect. a) The man, when the moment for dancing
796 arrives, takes a partner who usually accompanies him on every
786 evening of the dance. When they end by liking each other, as
a result of dancing together, the couples leave the dancing group
and withdraw to the forest to satisfy their sexual desires.

In normal times in the community this act would lead to
684 outbreaks of fighting in which the clans of the two participants
628 would clash. The man would be summoned and would be under
an obligation to pay a large sum for the harm done and a further
sum for the dangers and pains of childbirth in case of pregnancy;
or he would find himself obliged to buy the woman for wife in
reparation for the fault he had committed. In case he failed to
comply with one of these requirements, vengeance and war
would follow. But none of this happens during this time of fiesta.
796 If a man who has been with a woman during these nights of
786 dancing (which can go on for three or four months) cares to take
her as his wife, he must pay for her the price arranged with her
relatives, but if he does not want to do this, his total obligation
[431] is limited to a present of a robe. She on her part will give him a
similar gift or simply a belt for his loincloth. Afterward they do
not meet each other except on casual occasions.

Furthermore, if, owing to intimacies during the dance between unmarried couples, a child should be born, the father has
[848] no responsibility toward it or to the girl's relatives. The child is
accepted by the girl's family; it is not looked down on, and it
participates under conditions of equality with the legitimate heirs
in all the duties and rights of the other members of the family
group.

[123 cont.]

796 533 539 b) Of the songs which are sung in this ceremony of propitiation of rain, there are some of a simple, humorous character making fun of neighboring native groups, pointing out their defects, such as we transcribe below: [124]

I do not love the men of Ríohacha
Because they like to smoke tobacco;
I do not like the men of Nazaret,
Because they have a very sweet tooth.

831 But there are others of a typical erotic flavor, sung by the men, which are nothing more than an invitation to love, the story of their manliness, of their value as males. We translate literally a fragment which we heard in Uribía:

Come to me, my sister.
Come to me, my woman.
I am a male.

Do not look at him
At that youngster —
Walk straight and correctly.
Walk straight and correctly.
Walk straight and correctly.

I am here.
I am the male.
I bring with me my rifle
And my revolver.
I am a male.
You were very charming, my love.

Oh, that I may take an Indian girl!
I will pay for her
Because I am rich.

Many songs such as this are sung at the Dance of the Kid, but we were unable to take down the words because, as we have said, songs do not exist as such. They are not stereotyped and established with definite words and unchangeable form but are improvised, making use of every recourse, especially stories of past incidents, to which they adapt a well-known tune.

[124 cont.]

585 c) There is another very important fact in this sexual aspect of the fiesta that we are describing, which is what we might call proof of virginity. [125]

Virginity in woman is highly valued by the natives in spite of the fact that at the present time, due to economic ac- [836 178] culturative factors, it is increasingly difficult to find virgins among marriageable women, a state of affairs that the Indian male is well aware of. But it is always a matter of pride and something to be boasted of for a Guajiro man to find on his marriage night that his bride is a virgin. It is the custom, [583] furthermore, that if the man marries not knowing that his wife has lost her virginity and has the consequent disillusion on his wedding night, the bride's relatives have to return a part of the livestock which the man paid for her, especially the family necklace.* The Indian's concern about this matter, which remains hidden when he is in a normal state, comes to the surface dur- [578 273] ing his drunken bouts, when he will sing about his wife, extolling her and boasting of having had a virgin in his marriage hammock, or insulting and degrading her in coarse improvisations when he considers that he has been defrauded.

524 796 831 This attitude toward sex on the part of the native, or better said this value he places on the virginity of his future wives, is expressed in a sort of game which is played at the Dance of the Kid. To play it, the girls gather in a group about a singer who [539] sings such a song as this: "Let us see, my pretty miss, if you are a virgin, if truly you have not run around too freely, if no young male has put his hands on your body." He then passes his hands over each girl's body, tickling her. He starts at her big toe and goes upward, touching her instep, calves, knees, thighs, genitals, hips, stomach, torso, breasts, armpits, and continues up her neck until he reaches the top of her head. The girl who remains quiet, indifferent, without laughing and without even a smile wins the test and is declared a virgin. The singer then sings again: "You are indeed a virgin, my lovely majayura....," and chants a veritable song of flattery and finishes by escorting her to a set place. He then continues with the rest of the girls gathered there, repeating the same routine. When a girl moves or laughs,

[125 cont.]

524 796 831 the singer says to her: "You are not a virgin, I would never have believed this of you, but it is true. A pity, my pretty majayura, that you have not your virginity and that men have had their bodies over yours." He than places her in a place separate from the virgins. When he finishes doing this with all the girls in the group, he distributes prizes to the virgins, to [431] those who have triumphed in the trial, and he eulogizes them again. The girls later return the presents which are only simulated gifts.

114 The French writer Roger Callois has interpreted these fiestas carried out from ancient to present times in a chapter called [126] "La transgresión sagrada. Teoría de la Fiesta" [The Sacred Sin. Theory of the Fiesta], and he says in this respect; "To their normal way of life, occupied with their daily work, peaceful, surrounded by a system of prudent prohibitions where the maxim quieta non movere maintains law and order in their world, there is opposed the effervescence of the fiesta. This, if only its external aspects are considered, shows identical reactions at every civilized level. It implies a great number of excited, noisy people. These conglomerations of masses greatly influence the starting of and the contagion of an exultation which spends itself in shouts and gestures and encourages the uncontrolled abandonment of all to the most irresponsible impulses. Even today when without doubt the now impoverished fiestas have very little effect on the greyish background of the monotonous everyday life of the people and appear to be sporadic, spread out, almost stagnated, there may still be distinguished in their celebrations some miserable vestiges of the collective abandonment which characterized these ancient riotous celebrations." And later he states: "In the so-called primitive civilizations the contrast is very much more clearly marked. The fiesta lasts several weeks, even several months, interrupted by intervals of rest of from four to five days. At times it required several years to gather together the quantity of comestibles and delicacies which would be not only consumed or despatched ostentatiously but also destroyed and wasted purely and simply because waste and destruction are forms of excess

[126 cont.]

114 and they enter into the feast as part and parcel of the traditional ceremony.

"This usually ends in a frenzied, orgiastic manner in a libertine night of uproar and movement which the most ordinary instruments, playing to time, transform into rhythmic motion and dancing. According to the description of a witness, the human mass, crowded together, swaying and pounding the ground with their stamping, turn and shake around a central pole. The agitation is translated into every kind of manifestation which increases it. It grows and is intensified by everything that it expresses: the clash of spears against shields, guttural songs, loudly marking time, roughness and promiscuities during the dance. Violence erupts spontaneously. Every now and again men come to blows. The combatants are separated, lifted on high by strong arms, and are rocked to the rhythm of the music until they calm down. But none of this interrupts the dance. In the same way, the couples will suddenly leave, come together in the adjacent forest, and then return to take their places once again in the whirling crowd which continues until morning.

"One can understand that the fiesta which expresses such a paroxysm of life and stands out so drastically from the smallness of their accustomed daily tasks would appear to any individual joining in the excited throng as another world, where he feels sustained and transformed by forces that carry him along. His daily activity, harvesting, [127] hunting, fishing, or stock grazing just fill his time and provide for his immediate necessities. No doubt he puts into these activities all his attention, his patience, and his ability, but he lives with greater feeling in the memory of one fiesta and the anticipation of another, because the fiesta represents to him, to his memory and his desires, a time of intense emotion and the transformation of his being." (64)

64. Caillois, Roger, (El hombre y lo sagrado) [Man and the Sacred].

Caillois continues to explain the fiesta as the ceremony of transformation of chaos into cosmos; or in other words, a

[127 cont.]

714 representation of the re-creation of the universe, the resurgence of nature that changes and disappears, to reappear later.

796 In large part, this could explain the whole of the fiesta. In reality what in La Guajira is being celebrated under the name 821 of the Dance of the Kid is nothing but a true re-creation of the world of the natives of those barren plains. With the arrival of the rains the sea of sand is converted into a green world, the dry beds of the streams become powerful streams of water, the dry brushwood is transformed into green forest, anxiety over thirst disappears, fatigue from sun and desert is changed to rest, hunger to abundance, and worry to hope in the ripening of fruits and the disappearance of the specter of poverty which prowls the sierras and the plains. It is Mareiwa, their divinity, their good spirit, who has made his apparition over the lakes of the Sierra de Nevada, unleashing storms and hurricanes and bringing the promised rains to his creatures.

786 But, on the other hand, the sexual acts we have just shown to be present at this traditional fiesta of La Guajira should be 796 treated apart as they represent a transgression of the established rigid and severe cultural patterns that refer to carnal relations between men and women. As the general interpretation of the whole of the Guajiro community has not yet been finished, which could give us sufficient data to carry out necessary clarifications, we shall have to limit ourselves to noting certain outstanding facts.

836 Unmarried men and women in La Guajira, when looked at in its normal state, are subject to rigorous restrictions in their sex life. Sexual intercourse before marriage is not allowed to their women as the men want their spouses to be virgin. The [684] bachelor is limited in the satisfaction of his sexual impulses by the law of compensation payment, which forces him in the case of his having relations with an unmarried girl to pay a heavy indemnity by which is covered the harm done to the woman, the offense [128] to her relatives, and the possible pains and dangers of childbirth when pregnancy occurs. And if these impositions [628] are not complied with or if the Indian does not marry the girl, paying the price her relatives demand, revenge and declaration

836 [128 cont.]
[621] of war to the death will result between the clans affected.

One has to take into account the fact that a woman who
[583] has been bought for wife is relatively valuable, and the native
is not always in a position to accumulate the number of animals
sufficient to pay for her, although it is considered an obligation
on the part of his relatives to assist him when the time for his
[548] marriage arrives. As prostitution is so limited because of the
condition of inferiority in which it places the woman who traffics
in sex, the situation of the unmarried male in this respect is
difficult. We repeat again that we make this statement on the
[178] basis of the facts of La Guajira social customs in normal times,
and not on the basis of the present period when they are suffering from ever increasing problems of hunger, poverty, and acculturation, phenomena which are overthrowing all their traditional institutions.

Presenting the question in these terms, one can appreciate
the trying position of the bachelor Guajiro native who is without
slaves and without economic resources to enable him to buy a
wife. He lives within a regimen of limitations and restrictions
[834] which reach even to sexual taboos which can be divided into two
classes: special cases, especially applicable to the sex life of
shamans, as we have seen; and general cases, applicable to
the whole community and which go to the extreme of provoking
[195] curious euphemisms in the language when the word for the
genital organ is phonetically similar to some other word, as in
the case with the word for dog.

796 These restrictions must be considered in the totality of
786 the social norms, but this is not the moment to expound on them
as they will be fully covered in this review as an interpretation of the whole of Guajiro society. However, we wish to point out their presence in the Dance of the Kid, or better said their absence, since, as we have said, these restrictions disappear, and there is complete sexual freedom which permits the minstrel to caress the young maids on the pretext of deciding their virginity or loss of it, a thing that in normal times would not be permitted, and to go to the extreme of countenancing carnal union without economic or social consequences, the only

[128 cont.]

796 requirement being the girl's consent; and she, in spite of the
786 loss of her virginity, in spite of her illegal maternity, does not descend in status nor bring into her community a new being inferior in standing in any way to the others. [129]

This in large part explains the large attendance of youths of both sexes at the ceremony of the Dance of the Kid, which pleases the patron who sponsors the rite because it gives a greater solemnity to the rite and in that way aids in the propitiation of the rains, and, in consequence, the harvests will be of good quality and more abundant.

d) A proof that these ceremonies break away from the
535 sexual order established in the community is the frequent rep-
524 resentation of the sexual act of animals combined with other
796 dramatizations which we shall study later. Here are some exam-
831 ples.

The hawksbill turtle. Participants arrange themselves in a long line, or chain, firmly clasping each others' waists. They symbolize in this manner the sexual act of the hawksbill turtle. This line belongs to one singer who says in his song that his turtles are performing their sexual act as they are in heat. Another band is also headed by its singer. Their role consists in trying to separate the turtles, by tugging, each one separately, at the chain made by the turtles. The turtle that is separated from its team is taken over as a trophy by the other team, but if this group is unable to pull them away it loses the match. The activity lasts until all the turtles of the chain have been separated from their team or until the opposite band that is attempting to do this declares itself beaten.

526 The kid. This game is played on a cleared field. A group
of Indians holding each others' hands form a circle, making be-
535 lieve it is a corral in which female goats are kept at night. Out-
831 side the corral are the male goats represented by other Indians
796 who, in full view of the animals enclosed, march round the corral and make successive attempts to enter. The Indians who represent the fence fend them off but finally one or two males are able to force their way in. Once inside, they imitate and copy all the attitudes of the male when aroused; they chase the females, pursue and smell them, and end by simulating the sexual act. At

[129 cont.]
526 this moment the owner of the goats arrives to look over his flock,
535 and he states in his song that none of his animals are missing,
796 they are fat because pasture is fresh and abundant, and he an-
831 nounces that he is about to mark them. He starts by taking out
each female goat one by one and pretends to cut its ear, which
[420] is the way to mark such animals. He keeps up his song, referring to what he is doing. "I have many goats and now I shall lack neither meat nor milk; I am rich...."

e) We would add to the above the fact that Indian girls of
[554] the wealthy class do not take part in these gatherings, or they
796 do so on very rare occasions, as their prestige [130] would
786 diminish seriously in consequence of the opinion held of the fiesta that only those girls go to it who want to get a husband readily or to satisfy their sexual urges. Besides, it is the obligation of each man to flirt with or treat with familiarity the girl who becomes his partner in the dance, and her obligation is to supply him during the dance with roasted corn, bread, meat, chicha, etc.

Summarizing up to this point, we can state that the Dance of the Kid is a festival in which the Guajiro Indians seek to propitiate the rains at the same time that it celebrates their arrival and fecundity: fecundity in fruits; fecundity in animals, as dramatized in the ceremonies just described; and fecundity among men, in human beings, who are free from the restrictions which are imposed on them by the community in ordinary daily life to maintain social order.

• • •

536 Theatrical representations. "Drama is particularly difficult to classify because so often it gets mixed up with religion.... On the other hand, dramatic scenes can be executed for collective entertainment or as farces with no special pretentions, as for example in a Tahitian pantomime which represents the theft of a basket of food from a sleeping servant; although it can occur, on occasion, that these simple and uncertain experiments develop into real dramas." (65)

65. Lowie. Antropología Cultural [Cultural Anthropology], XI, 194-195.

[130 cont.]

536 796 Lowie's words, which we have just quoted, serve us well for what we have wished to call theatrical representations in La Guajira, as these also are but simple farces in which they seek to represent some act in the life of the community, in their mythology, or from scenes from the natural life surrounding them, in the midst of the ceremonies that are organized to celebrate the arrival of the rains, the propitiation of these, and the ripening of the fruits [of the soil]. Naturally, as we stated at the beginning, this ceremony is an inseparable whole up to a certain point, a totality in which the most trivial diversions, such as these unimportant representations and some games, are mixed with outstandingly important actions such as the transgression of social patterns in the satisfaction of sexual impulses, which we have just described and analyzed and in which the organization norms are utterly discarded, tradition is broken, and they give free rein to wantonness and [131] pleasure. It is above all a rite. But as Lowie himself affirms: "It is frequent that these important rituals present dramatic elements, because of which it was sometimes believed that a ceremony was nothing more than a dramatized myth. Now we know that when myth and ritual are found associated, most frequently the former has been added later, whether or not it be more ancient.... In short, the ceremonial of primitives at times is something more than pomp, and it can raise itself to the height of a true theatrical representation." (66)

66. Lowie. Op. cit., XVII, 310.

796 841 It is curious, nevertheless, that in the celebration of this *fiesta* dedicated to the propitiation of the rains, nothing related to the myths about them is to be found. Representations of fecundity abound in many of its aspects, as we have just seen in the description of the sexual aspect. But there is no representation related to the rains, at any rate none known to us, unless it be one where the devil and a cloud intervene, or the devil and smoke, as the word to designate the two concepts — cloud and smoke — is the same in Guajiro, *sirúma*. In this dramatization, which we shall describe later, the cloud triumphs over the devil. It could be interpreted as the triumph of the rains over the long

[131 cont.]
796 summer and over sicknesses, pestilences, and deaths which occur
821 as a consequence of it. But we have no work to sustain this
affirmation. Also one must take into account the fact that the
[609] natives are not willing that strangers be present at their Fiesta of
the Kid; and when they are, the play is much repressed in its
natural expression and becomes a pale copy, artificial, almost
we might say a special product for exportation. Missionaries
[797] have contributed greatly to this since they are opposed to the
fiesta, considering it amoral or immoral because of the sexual
freedom which is shown during its performance and the representation of natural scenes of the procreative life of animals. All the
[114 data that we have are not the product of our own personal observation
124] of the fiesta but are reports collected from different sources in
diverse parts of La Guajira. They have, at the very least, the
value of data verified several times over.

All this leads us to think that even though the Dance of the Kid is directly related to the rains since it always starts when the rains begin even though it is specially dedicated to Mareiwa, the divinity of the rains, as we shall prove in the coming chapter, even though its name [132] appears to be derived from the stellar constellation of the Seven Kids, iwa, whose association with rain we shall also note in the following chapter, it is primarily a ceremony dedicated to fecundity, fecundity of the soil shown by the sprouting of plant life brought about by the rains. Fecundity and rain are seen, then, as two inseparable factors, two terms in the same equation: life.

526 We spoke of the aspect of demonstration of ability in
796 theatrical representations when we delimited the areas of study of
the ceremonial of the Kid. In effect, according to narrations we have at our disposal about the representative games, which we shall describe in detail in the latter part of this chapter, at the end of each one, out of the two sides which have taken part in the development, one side is seen to triumph over the other due to its greater skill or ability in movement or to the physical strength of those taking part when it is a matter of representations of struggles, as we saw in the game of the hawksbill turtle, and as we shall see in the representation of scenes introducing animals,

526 [132 cont.]

796 men and animals, or men alone, as in the description of a putchi, or interclan war. This demonstration of skill and ability 535 in their plays is shown very clearly in the chicha-maya dance, 796 which will be fully detailed in the descriptive aspect of Guajiro culture shortly to be published. This dance, in general terms, is restricted to a veritable struggle between the man and the woman who are partners, a struggle in which the woman endeavors to overthrow the man.

536 However, in the plays of a mythical nature the scene is more limited and always ends in the same way. It is static in 796 the sense that its conclusion cannot be changed by the ability of the players but is determined by a prearranged plot, rigidly imposed for each occasion it is played. This we believe is what gives it its true mythical nature. It is part of the oral tradition of the group, and for this reason it cannot be subject to variations determined by the moment.

Having made these general statements about their theatrical plays, or dramas, we will now describe them one by one, showing first those that refer to social life, then those relative to the mythical aspect, and finally those in which animals only, or animals with men, appear.

1. Visit between Upper and Lower La Guajira. Two groups take part in this play, each composed of men and women. The first represents Upper La Guajira, the other, Lower La Guajira. The groups line up in two parallel rows [133] spaced a cuadra apart. The components of each group hold each other round the waist, face to face, with a small space between them. The 536 singer who heads the team of Indians that represents Upper La 539 Guajira begins by addressing the visitors from Lower Guajira, 796 "Ansh piá (Have you arrived?)." "Aaa (Yes)," replies the other. "Kasáchicki (What's new?)," asks the first singer. "Nohots (Nothing new)," replies his opposite number from the south country. Again he of the north asks, "How goes the winter? Have the expected rains finally arrived?" The other answers, "we are well content. The rains have come so our crops are in good condition. We have collected food in plenty, and there is still a quantity left to collect. The pastures, like the trees, are green again; our herds have water to satisfy their thirst in the wells and water

[133 cont.]

536 holes. They are fat and have increased. We are neither short of
539 meat nor milk nor fruit...." He from the north then speaks,
796 saying, "I, my friend, am full of woe. I suffer from anxiety, fearing hunger this coming winter. My herds died of thirst beside the dry wells. I have no other food than the fruit of the cardon and the prickly pear. I have to travel long and painful distances so that my hungry herds can find pasture and water. The summer is cruel. The sun burnt the seedlings and the grass." He of the south again intervenes, this time to invite his friend in these or similar words, "Seeing things are thus with you, my brother, why not come with us to our country, to Lower La Guajira. There you will find green pastures and overflowing water holes for your herds. Come with your wife and nephews [and nieces, sobrinos] because there will be food for you all. There the winter is good; we shall expect you."

Finally the one from Upper La Guajira says "Yes, I will go with you. I will leave here with my starving herds and with my people who are in dire need and poverty...." After this the two groups unite, embrace each other at the waist, and walk off together in the direction of Lower La Guajira. So ends the play.

2. Interclan war. As in the previous case, two teams are formed headed by their singing leaders, but this time women do not take part directly. The play starts when a player of one of the teams walks up to the other and pretends to kill one of its members. The latter acts as if he were wounded, twists and squirms on the ground, then dies. The assailant leaves him lying there and flees to his own group and hides himself. The singer then starts up his song, stating that the cause of the killing was jealousy because the victim was attempting to make love to the killer's wife, or he was the lucky rival in winning a girl they were both courting. The other team sees the death of their member and hastens [134] to pick him up. They make grand gestures of fury and demand vengeance, and the singer of this group expresses the rage of his clan; he threatens the opposite group whom he accuses in insulting language and ends by declaring his bitter enmity. Shortly afterward comes the scene of the compensation payment negotiations in which the arbitrator of the murdered man's clan visits the aggressor group to demand payment for the

[134 cont.]

536 offense received, asking for a very large sum, stating how pas-
539 sionately angry his clan is and warning them that if the sum de-
796 manded is not met war will be the inevitable consequence. The singer continues: "Pay for my nephew because you have spilled his blood and by that you have caused us great sorrow. I ask in a kindly manner that you do so unless you want to bring upon yourselves our hatred, if you do not want us to kill your nephews and despoil your people of their herds, to fill up your wells and burn down the homes of your relatives. If our just claim is not met we will carry off your women, your children and nephews and nieces as slaves. Pay!"

The aggressor band collects a number of children — who are to represent cattle — necklaces, etc., and hand these over to the contendors. But their singer states that it is too little, that his clan demands more. He orders the other clan to take back their offering and states that as they have not complied with the stipulations of their agreement that they must prepare to pay their debt with their own blood. War is declared. Each band concentrates on arming itself; they collect young cardons which they split in strips to serve as weapons.

The singer of the murdered man's clan again sings: "Get ready, my sons and nephews. We are about to attack our enemies, to collect for the blood of our brother as they have not paid us what they owe. But do not thoughtlessly expose yourselves. Be careful. Attack, but keep well protected behind trees and cardons. Take careful aim. Do not let yourselves be beaten, or we in future will be called cowards and will not be respected. No one then will pay us for our women, and we shall be despised by all. In all La Guajira they will know the story of our defeat, which will be converted into mockery and contempt."

The leader of the group to which the killer belongs sings: "My nephews, be prepared. Very soon these people will arrive to attack us, so be ready for war. Do not be neglectful even for one minute because they will arrive suddenly with the intention of burning our homes, of stealing our herds, destroying our sources of water, and taking our women and children for slaves. Fight and aim well. We shall destroy them."

[134 cont.]

536 539 796 After the leaders of each group have sung these harangues, which are characteristic of those delivered by the chiefs in war, the attack comes. Those who engage in the combat pretend to leave at dawn (all this the leader refers to in his song) in order to fall suddenly on their enemies. With the piles of cardons they shoot at each other. The defenders run away, leaving the field covered [135] with the dead. In the combat they will incite each other. On throwing the cardon they imitate the noise of the explosion and the whistle of the bullets when fired. Each one seeks shelter where he can find it and dodges blows. Those that are touched by thrown missiles fall, screaming that they are wounded, and pretend to die. The chiefs harangue their men: "Shoot well my nephews or else they will think we are cowards."

536 796 When all the projectiles are used up, each band gathers its bodies. The one with the most casualities has lost the battle. At this moment the women come on the scene to mourn the dead of their clan. They cover their faces with *pañuelos* and, kneeling over a corpse, they cry pitifully. Then they go to bury their dead, and so ends the representation of the *putchi*.

3. *The devil and the Indians.* In this dramatization a male Indian covers himself with a black robe, imitating the devil, or *yorujá*. The devil appears walking in the fields, and an Indian steps out to meet him. The devil with great expertness grips him by the nostrils with his thumb and first finger and throws him to the ground. The Indian is killed. This scene in which the devil always participates but each time with different Indians is repeated three times with the same result, until in the end all the Indians who act in the play unite against the devil and kill him. The devil disappears, but after a short interval he returns to the scene. A new struggle starts up, but this time the devil wins because he kills all the Indians, men and women, who take part in the fight. Later he withdraws and takes off the robe, thus ending the play.

4. *The devil and the cloud.* The Indians take off their robes and make a kind of tent with them into which they all go. This tent is meant to represent smoke or a cloud. Inside, the Indians

[135 cont.]
536 pretend to be eating and playing tranquilly. The devil, another
796 Indian, taking advantage of the carelessness of the men who are
occupied with their fun, and covered as always with his black
robe, enters the cloud to do them evil. Immediately a fight
starts up between the Indians and the devil. In the end the cloud
traps the devil and emerges triumphant in the play.

5. The horse race. Horse racing is the sport or trial of
541 prowess most practiced in the ordinary life of the Guajiro. In
536 this sport they try to bring to the fore the name of the horse and
796 the skill of the jockey. In all the large *fiestas* a number of horse
races are always staged, and such is their enthusiasm for them
[538] that they are frequently mentioned in some stories told by the
natives. [136]

During the Fiesta of the Kid two groups are formed which,
536 as in the previous cases, are under the direction of their respective
539 leaders. Each group has assigned to it an equal number of
796 men, representing so many race horses. The race course having been previously marked out with its starting point and finishing post, one of the singers begins by referring to the goodness of his horse, praising its speediness. The other replies in an identical tone, using eulogistic concepts regarding his animal. They soon arrange a match which they put into practice. One of them says: "There goes my roan horse; he is swifter than the clouds and the wind and braver than any other in La Guajira." The other sings: "This is my chestnut horse. I am sure that he will win because he is swifter than the deer." They start off their horses and run the race. Following them, race another pair, then another, until all the competitors have taken part.

825 The bees and the fruit thieves. There is a kind of small
241 bee in the peninsula which the Indians call *wáya*. These bees
536 make their nests in trees or in hollow tree trunks. If a blow is
796 struck near the hive, the bees swarm out, attacking and getting into the hair of anybody standing nearby. They get inside the intruders' clothes and swarm all over them, crawling over their bodies, buzzing angrily, bothering their enemies until they are in a state of desperation. The Indians have a habit of collecting
536 hives of these bees and placing them at the entrance to their
796 fields, making use of the bees to defend their harvest from thieves.

[136 cont.]

536 796 In the scene two groups appear: one representing the bees in the hive; the other, the thieves who want to steal the crops of the field. The bee group is placed at the entrance to the field, arranged in compact form to look like the hives. The robbers begin to arrive and try to enter the field to steal the ripe fruit, but in the attempt they brush against the hives. The bees swarm out, buzzing and attacking the thieves, who decamp pursued by the bees. These punish the men to the best of their ability and thus prevent the harvest being stolen.

223 [262] 7. Hunting the jirijir. The natives know a small bird called jirijir that appears in La Guajira during harvest time and devours the products of the fields. The Indians hunt them assiduously in order to defend their crops as well as to use them for food, since they are fat and pleasant tasting. The method they use to catch them is as follows. This small bird generally always flies in a straight line, entering invariably at some determined point and leaving by another in a precise manner. The Indian takes advantage of this [137] observation; hence when he goes to his crops at the times these birds are settling, he provides himself with hammocks or large nets. He places his hammocks at the point where the birds will fly out and then waits their arrival. He frightens them and immediately with great rapidity covers their point of exit, and the birds are trapped in the net, falling into it by the hundreds.

536 796 This scene is represented in the ceremony that we are describing. At the beginning, various Indians who will act as the hammocks, that is, as those who will attempt to trap the birds in their nets are found in a group apart. Some children are grouped in the middle of the space to represent the field, and a third band formed of adults will act as birds.

When everything is ready, the last group begins to move, and they approach making motions as if flying and making a peculiar noise, imitating the call of the jirijir. They fall on the group of children, that is, on the field. A new group, this time composed of women, intervene in the scene to frighten the birds with yells and noisy clapping of hands. The birds try to escape as a flock, following the straight line of flight they are accustomed

[137 cont.]

536 to, always making their peculiar call. In this way they pass over
796 the place where the hammock men are in position; they are arranged two by two in a semicircle, hands held right in left, forming quadrilaterals. The birds reach this point running at the greatest speed possible, when the hammock men stop them by surrounding them to prevent their escape. They struggle, but in the end the semicircle begins to close until it becomes a circle, and the birds are imprisoned inside. An Indian then comes to kill the birds. He does so by taking them one by one by the arm as if this were the wing and by pretending to wring their necks. Once all the birds are taken out from the net the scene ends.

8. Jaguars and dogs. This theatrical game is intended to
825 show the fortitude and courage of the jaguar and its superiority over dogs. For this reason it requires much care in the selection of the Indians who will take part in it because they must struggle fiercely with each other, and it is essential that the team that
773 plays the part of jaguars be the conquerors. This has caused us to believe in the mythical value of the jaguar, which actually appears in their legends related to Mareiwa as well as in clan nomenclature. The game consists in engaging in a severe struggle in which the jaguar always manages to overcome the dogs and dominate them through being stronger. The complete description can be summed up thus: The group of jaguars pretends to be settled in a tree; sometimes they actually are. The group representing the dogs arrives, following the scent and the trail until they come to the foot of the tree [138] in which the jaguars are all lurking. On finding them, the dogs bark furiously beneath the tree and provoke the jaguars until they jump down, and it is then that the terrible struggle takes place. When in the end a dog falls to the ground, the jaguar pretends to bite it to pieces, clawing its breast open and attacking its throat, where he starts to devour it. The dog whimpers painfully, goes into convulsions, and stays motionless, as if dead. The jaguar gets up satisfied as he has triumphed, and so ends the play.

9. Dogs and peccaries. Two groups are formed, each one
533 composed of ten men arranged in line and captained, as is custom-
526 ary, by a singer, who is the chief of the group. One group represents the peccaries, the other the dogs which are going to hunt them.

[138 cont.]

536 796 526 The play starts when the peccaries gather in a group, pretending by their position and their movements that they are inside the cave which is their refuge. The chief of the dog group begins to sing while these gather round him, and he harangues them to go in and kill the peccaries and not let themselves be beaten by them. The group of peccaries answer threateningly and hasten to defend themselves. The dogs approach their prey cautiously and single out one from among the group. A struggle starts between a dog and one of the peccaries, both fighting desperately for mastery, each player striving to grab his adversary by his loincloth to lift him in the air and throw him to the ground. The struggle is fierce and stubborn, because they usually select the most hardened fighters and well-muscled men to represent both the peccaries and the dogs. It continues until one of the combatants is floored by the other, in which case he admits defeat. The winner's group marks up one point. When the first pair have finished their match, a new one is started between two other Indians, and so on successively until all the representatives of the two groups have participated. In the development of the personal struggles between dog and peccary, each singer incites his man, exhorts him to greater efforts, etc. Finally, they add up the score of points obtained by each group, and the winner receives a prize, consisting generally of food.

10. The fox and the rabbit. Three personages take part in this act: one who acts as a fox, one as a rabbit, and a child who has the role of a watermelon [patilla]. The game consists in seeing which of the two animals, the fox or the rabbit, will get the watermelon they are fighting for. Both of them want to steal it. So each one of them seizes the child (who is twelve or thirteen years old) by an arm, and he who can pull him away from the other is considered the winner. [139]

To better understand this play, it is well to state that while in La Guajira we collected a story about the fox and the rabbit which is published in Revista de Folklore (67) in which there is also

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67. Pineda Giraldo, Roberto. "La Chama, un mito guajiro" [The Chama, a Guajiro Myth],

526 536 796 [139 cont.]
shown a test of cunning between these two animals. In this tale, the rabbit is the winner.

11. The man and the wild boar. One man takes the part of a wild boar, the other that of the man who stalks it. The hunter follows the boar, which runs swiftly away, dodging the hunter's arrows in its flight. In this trial of dexterity, the hunter will be the winner if in the end he wounds the boar with one of the arrows he shoots; or it will be the boar that triumphs if it is able to tire out its persecutor and dodge all the arrows shot at it.

12. The hunter, the dog, and the rabbit. This play is another trial of dexterity, as the end in view is to try the ability of each actor in the role assigned to him. It represents, in short, a hunting party, in which the man and the dog try to capture and kill the rabbit. The dog tries to catch it and tear it to pieces, while the man follows at a greater distance, throwing stones at it. If he manages to hit it, the rabbit acts as if killed, giving the victory to the huntsman. The result is the same if the dog is successful in catching his prey with his claws, but if the rabbit should evade both of them, showing greater ability and speed than the other two, he becomes the winner of the test.

536 796 13. The song of the serpent. We have left this section to terminate our study of the theater in La Guajira because it presents characteristics different from all the other representations which we have described. It does not involve a demonstration of skill or force, nor does it require the intervention of contending groups in any way. In consequence there is no dialogue, but
[533] there is a monologue sung by the leader of the group followed by all the actors, in which the deeds of the serpent are recounted

As a clarifying note we refer our reader to the chapter "Sickness and Medicine," in which this reptile's magic power is clearly evident, especially in relation to pregnant women and all that surrounds them. We also would recall that, as in the case of
[614] the jaguar, the serpent [140] figures in the naming of the clans, at times in close association with the jaguar.

The act develops as follows: A line is formed of alternate men and women who take each other's hands. They run with short steps, undulating to copy the motion of a serpent when

536 [140 cont.]

796 moving along the ground. Headed by their leader they all continue to sing the song of the serpent, saying more or less the following: "I am the snake. I drag myself along the ground. [539] I do harm to no one. But he who dares to step on me because I am on the ground gets his punishment. I bite him and wound him. At times I kill him. He has to stay in bed and suffer for a long time as a punishment for having trodden on me and for thinking that I am helpless because I drag myself along the ground...." This song is repeated several times. [141]

IX

Mareiwa and Wanurú

or

Notions of Good and Evil

771 Through all the preceding chapters we have tried to explain clearly what constitutes the magic life of the Guajiro, which is almost the same as saying his spiritual life, and in passing we have mentioned the presence and activities of beings with higher powers than ordinary mortals, able to do good or evil according to which being intervenes in each particular case. We have thus touched on two fundamental ideas: good and evil.

776 Our interest is now concentrated in trying to elucidate the 177 quality of these spirits, or supernatural beings. These can be very seriously confused owing particularly to the influence of acculturation and more specifically to the pressure exerted by missionaries in their prosletyzing function. So great is the misapplication of terms and concepts in this world of ideas that we might call the religious, that even the Guajiro mythology has been transformed by the use of terms which have a pejorative and 773 degrading effect on the Guajiro people (68).

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146 68. This statement is based on the legend which we obtained orally from

[141 cont.]

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> an Indian of the Nazaret locality relating to Mareiwa and the origin of humanity, in which are presented the beginnings of the different groups of mankind: natives and foreigners. The legend states that Mareiwa created mankind and gathered them together, inviting them to a banquet. Those who complied with the forms of social etiquette (shaking hands respectfully, sitting in the right place, behaving with composure, eating according to civilized rules, using knives and forks, washing hands, etc., were turned into arĭjuna ("white," civilizado); those who misbehaved, who did not comply with these rituals of social etiquette, that is, those who showed they were Indians, were from that time classed as wayú ("Indians"). As can be seen, the Indian believes himself superior ~~[sic]~~ to the White because of these details of social etiquette, of which he is partially or totally ignorant. [142]

177 771 776 947 The problem arises from the fact that those two notions of good and evil, represented by two classes of spirits, benign and malignant, have been changed for the Catholic or general Christian concepts of God and devil, concepts which the native, coming more and more in contact with the Christian type of civilization has gradually come to accept in the process of his conversion to new ideas.

947 This affirmation is corroborated by various citations, taken from the writings of Catholic or Protestant missionaries as well as from those of travelers or of ethnologists who have been involved in the same confusion. To demonstrate the point we transcribe several such cases.

[539] Father de Carcagente referring to the church at Manaure says: "The Indians say to God 'Have pity upon us.' They know

[*142 cont.*]

797 what *God* can do for them," phrases which the Guajiro translates
[534] in this way: "*Nuchúntaca guayú numuín Maléigua* '*Pumúliaja guayú*.' *Je natújain au tu náinjecta nau Maléigua.*" (69)

[113] 69. Carcagente. Guía Goajiro [Guajiro Guide], pp. 18-19. The italics are ours.

The Protestant missionaries, on their part, published in Guajiro and in Spanish a version of the Gospel of Saint Mark throughout which the word "God" is represented in Guajiro by the word "Mareiwa" (70).

70. Máruko: Cf. Bibliography.

Father José Agustin de Barranquilla, a Capuchin missionary who traveled widely through the greater part of Guajiro territory on an evangelistic mission and collected his impressions in a book, when speaking of the qualities and moral defects of the Guajiro, uses the following terms: "He is monotheist, that is, he believes in only one Supreme Being called Mareigua (God) ... he has something similar to the devil which he calls Yarujá or Yolujá..." (71)

71. Barranquilla. *Así es la Guajira* [This is La Guajira], II, 57.

And further along he adds: "The Guajiro is not like other Indians, idolatrous, because vestiges have never been found among all the Guajiro antiquities either of idols that they worshiped in times past or traditions that show at any time their connection with idolatry, except for certain insignificant talismans of a domestic and family nature which they considered could render them service. They never practiced any cult rendering homage to the sun, moon, or any other visible thing. The Guajiro attributes
776 everything good that occurs in this world to Merigua (God). Mareigua is always good, never evil. He it was that created the world and all visible things. He alone. He is invisible

[142 cont.]

776 although he sees everything.... Mareigua combines three main spirits and many subaltern ones inferior to Him. [143] Some of these spirits are masculine, some feminine.... An Indian sees [421 that his crop is drying up for lack of water, and far from imploring 789] Heaven for rain, he beats his drum every night and at dawn as if he expected the sound to break up the clouds, or he fires his gun with a similar hope.... Should one of his relatives become ill, he calls in the shaman so that he can with his remedies, his maraca, his tobacco or manilla spittle, and the instructions of his spirits, cure the sick man; instead of appealing to God and asking him to bring his relative back to health." (72)

72. Ibid., II, 65-67.

Jorge Isaacs, the famous Colombian novelist, in the second half of the past century, made an excursion under government authority to study La Guajira and other regions of the country, and he wrote in the report he presented: "Mareigua is the name by which the Guajiro designate God, or better said, the unbegotten one, immaterial force, master of creation." (73)

73. Isaacs. Estudio del Lenguaje Guajiro [Study of the Guajiro Language], 303.

Finally, the ethnologist Professor Hernández de Alba, as a result of his expedition to the peninsula says: "Mareigua. All that is good for the Guajiro: rain, abundance, life, protection, the world in which he lives, all come from Mareigua, the one and only God, always good, never evil...." (74)

74. Hernández de Alba. Etnología Guajira [Guajiro Ethnology], 49-50.

177 776 The quotations which we have cited lead us to the belief by the Guajiro in an all-powerful god, unique and universal. This

[143 cont.]

177 seems to be true, in a certain way, for those who are imbued with
776 Christian religious practices, because when they refer to our God, to Jesus Christ, they call him Mareiwa. But at the bottom of their minds, in our opinion, there is some distinction which is precisely what we shall try to explain.

753 When we spoke of the shaman, we referred extensively to
775 his protector spirits, the real healers of sickness, of whom the shaman is no more than an intermediary. Naturally, we also spoke, in that chapter and in the one relating to sickness, of the evil spirits, the malignant ones, the cause of the trouble, known by the generic name of wanurú, and we explained how the first are, in general, the spirits of dead shamans who have disappeared but continue to exercise their functions for the benefit of the community, while the wanurú are also spirits of dead people who satisfy their personal vengeances, revenge themselves for disrespect shown them in their status after death, or are simply dangerous because of the circumstances of their death, as in the case of suicides. [144]

776 In addition to the spirits of sickness and death, there is another named yo-ru-já, difficult to describe and whose functions are difficult to delineate. We only know that he is magnificently
[177] malevolent and that it is he, the complete opposite of Mareiwa (God) that has been named "demon" or "devil" by missionaries, writers, etc.

Regarding the previous statement, we have several quotations that confirm it: "Yoluhá is the demon in the simple Guajiro theogony. As with god, it is scarcely a concept, a word that represents the forces of destruction and, at the same time, of power, since it is even used by the shaman when he is foretelling the future. "What does the devil say (Jamúseneik Yolujá)?" is the question the diviner asks. The Guajiro demon is not, therefore, like the Christian devil, the opposite of God, because in addition to wickedness and destruction it also embraces the concept of power and divination." (75)

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75. Hernández de Alba. Op. cit., 50.

[144 cont.]

776 "It seems that for the Guajiro there may exist two devils, one called Yarujá or Yolugá and the other the Guanurú. The Yarujá, or devil properly speaking, is the most evil that exists and the most frightful. He is always evil and exercises his actions on man, on humanity, but he acts mainly not through himself but through another and minor devil, which is Guanurú.

[753] "The Guanurú is more involved in worldly affairs; he is the enemy of the body as well as the soul. He is charged with producing sicknesses in people, in animals, even in plants. The Guanurú is also a spirit." (76)

76. Barranquilla. Op. cit., II, 67.

[114] As we see the confusion is great, and it is not all due to the writings of the authors above quoted but also to the natives themselves, as we shall see below.

What may be deduced at present is the establishment of two categories of spirits, one for those of good, the other for those of evil, categories based on their greater or lesser capacity to exercise benign or malignant influences respectively. But if we examine a little more carefully the series of facts observed by us in our journey in 1947, we are able to note some further differences which will enable us to explain somewhat better the problem that appertains to the ideas of good and evil in the native's mind. These differences arise from the presence of beings which have characters, which are disposed to exercise good or evil on the individual or on the community in general, that is, benign or evil spirits that personify [145] good and evil and that preside over actions socially acceptable or reprehensible.

• • •

Mareiwa. In our opinion, Mareiwa is above all the propitiatory spirit of the rains. This statement is based on the following facts:

1. The Dance of the Kid, as we saw in the previous chapter, is dedicated to him and takes place when the summer rains appear.

[145 cont.]

776 2. According to data collected in the field among the people, the son of God (Mareiwa) exists. He was born from the union of the waves and the clouds in a place called Pulówi, in certain "sacred" lakes where human beings may not go, situated in the Sierra Nevada, where there are a number of both fresh- and salt-water lakes surrounded by medicinal plants. Mareiwa on occasion descends to these places, and it is at these times that heavy rainfall occurs in La Guajira, that is, during the seasons which in the peninsula are called autumn, spring, and winter. Then all the vegetation sprouts, and all the trees, pasture, and plants are green.

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[821]

3. Another legend states that Mareiwa was born of a woman who became pregnant when, being in her monthly period, she was greatly frightened by the spectacle of a tremendous storm. Without having sexual relations with any mortal, she afterward gave birth in the same way as other women.

4. Guajiro legends relating to Mareiwa also assert that he was born under an olive tree (77) in some place in La Guajira.

[137]

77. The olive tree we refer to in these paragraphs is not the same as that of temperate zones but is an autochthonous tree, whose similarity to the former justifies its name.

The importance of this legend stems from the peculiar character of the tree, which is the only one belonging to the Guajiro flora that escapes the effects of long summers and is always fresh and green, keeping its leaves and bearing fruit throughout the year.

788 5. In his propitiation of the rains when summer lasts too
776 long, the shaman invokes his protector spirits, spirits of good,
821 and especially Fumayule, the name by which curers [curanderos] know Mareiwa.

776 6. In the work and paragraphs already quoted from the
821 work of Professor Hernández de Alba, we find a new relation between Mareiwa and rain; he says: "Mareigua. Everything that is good for the Guajiro: rain, abundance... and He saved

776 [146] the people during the deluge on the high hill of Pororo,
821 which he made to grow higher as the waters rose." (78)

78. Hernández de Alba. *Op. cit.*, 49-50.

825 7. When we spoke of natural phenomena in magic, we
821 stated that a kind of veneration was very commonly paid by the natives to an iguana that lives in the crevices of rocks, especially in the cliffs of the coast; veneration that is manifested outwardly by *fiestas* and dances and is intended to influence the iguana not to put obstacles in the way of the rains, which are under his dominion. Up to this point the fact appears to have no connection with the subject which we are treating, but supported by linguistics, we shall clarify our point of view:

192 The Guajiro word for iguana is *iwána*, and it can be split
821 up thus: *iwa*, "rain" (this is what the Indians call the rain that
825 falls in summer, April); *na*, particle which seems to denote an abundance of something, as may be seen in these other examples: *ipa-na-rú*, a La Guajiro place name which means "among many rocks" and corresponds in context to: a conical depression that holds rain water situated among many rocks; *garrapatamana*, another place name descriptive of its meaning, "a place where there are many animal ticks [*garrabatas*]. According to the above, *iwána* means an "abundance of rain."

192 Now, the word by which the constellation of the Seven
776 Kids is called when in a certain position it coincides with the
821 summer rains, is *íwa*, the same as "rain." Furthermore, from the name "Mareiwa" we can separate the constant particle, *íwa*, "rain." Unfortunately, we could discover nothing that might correspond to the first particle, *máre*, in the vocabulary we collected, nor in others that have been published and which we had the opportunity to consult. But, on reviewing a dictionary of the Arawak language of the Guianas, with which the Guajiro dialect is closely linked, we find that *mali* is the name of a "certain star"; *malidalte* is "beginning of drought." "The name is derived from the star *mali*." (79)

79. Anonymous. *Op. cit.*, 71.

[146 cont.]

174 If we accept the idea that the Guajiro are descended from
192 the Arawak of the Guianas, with whom they are intimately con-
776 nected both by their language and culture, there is nothing
821 strange to be found in the formation of the name Mareiwa from
mali, male (the l and the r do not exist in the Guajiro language),
and íwa, words that are used to name stars and in consequence
must be related to the general Arawak cosmogony. In any case,
776 the linguistic association of star-rain-god-divinity confirms the
821 statement which we have made that Mareiwa [147] is none other
than the propitiatory spirit of the rains, and by the same token,
that of good harvests, of abundance, and of well-being.

The harsh geographical conditions of La Guajira and the
132 technical incapacity of the native to dominate and put them
182 in his service without incurring the great inconveniences which
776 are above all occasioned by the climate, have caused this
being (Mareiwa) to be raised to first position in the category of
[233 protector spirits of the community. Also, the changes brought
178] about in their economy during past centuries have contributed to
this advance in status, because since the introduction of stock
grazing, winter has become more and more indispensable for
the maintenance of pasture, without which the stock would
suffer serious losses. We have no data relating to the myths or
178 religion of these Indians at the time of the Conquest but what
776 we have unearthed and the fact that there is a veritable confu-
sion with respect to the origin and functions of Mareiwa point
to the fact that, in a certain way, the Guajiro are living in a
state of transition with regard to their divinities, we might al-
most say a moment of true creation of their gods which has not
yet been definitively achieved, and for which contact with
western civilization has created difficulties which by now are
practically insurmountable.

775 Wanurú. As we referred extensively to the wanurú when
we were speaking of sickness and the shaman, we shall add only
a few details here and systematize the knowledge we have ac-
quired about this matter up to now.

1. The wanurú can harm the Guajiro bodily and spiritu-
ally, bodily by means of such sicknesses as attack men, animals,

[147 cont.]
775 and plants either individually, or collectively with the appear-
ance of epidemics; spiritually by inspiring reprehensible ac-
tions such as murder, which brings social misfortunes in its wake.
In general, all the transgressions of the Guajiro social law —
rage, suicide, infidelity, etc. — are inspired by this spirit.

2. They have permanent sites of habitation, especially in
unoccupied houses.

3. They are grouped into special categories dependent
on the circumstances of their death, which influences their
manner of life in the next world.

4. They make their appearance by adopting special
[776] bodies, that is, they make themselves visible. In this they
differ fundamentally from the spirits of good, like Maraiwa,
who manifests himself in no bodily form. In this connection
775 [148] we have the following native belief: If during the night
or in the late hours of the afternoon, a sizeable, nocturnal white
825 moth is found in the bedroom, it must not be mistreated or
killed. It must be treated with consideration because it is
nothing but the spirit of some ancestor — wanurú — who has come
on a visit. If it becomes very troublesome and keeps one awake
by its fluttering, it must be got out of the room very carefully.
[787] If it should be killed, the spirit of the dead incarnated in it
would appear in dreams and exclaim: "Why did you kill me?
I like you and for that reason I came to visit your home. You
have done me harm." And most certainly the spirit would take
vengeance in some bad way or another on the person who had
violated the rules of hospitality due the spirits of the dead.

775 Yorujá. The concept of Yorujá is more difficult to clarify.
He seems to be the same as the wanurú for the following reasons:

1. The natives when they refer to him give one to under-
stand that he is the spirit of the dead.

2. As with the wanurú, he has his sites of fixed habitation,
especially in cemeteries, in the crevices of Cabo de la Vela, or
hidden in the boughs of trees in the lonely woods of Emejuy in
Lower La Guajira.

3. Also, as with the wanurú, he is the cause of both physi-
[753] cal and spiritual harm to the natives and to the community in
general.

[148 cont.]

775 4. Also like the wanurú, he takes on special forms of
dress, such as that of a "king," an arĩjuna (civilizado), and an
[777] Indian. At times flames leap from his eyes and mouth (possibly
acculturation from Catholic legends about the devil).

5. There are other beliefs that refer to him, such as the
[825] one that states that when during the night a woman should find a praying mantis [mantis religiosa] she should hurriedly throw some cotton seeds and salt on the fire in order that with the flame produced when these catch fire, the malignant spirit, or yorujá, who brings the mantis with him will be frightened away. There is a similarity in this belief to the one that prescribes placing horses' skulls around to frighten the wanurú away from the vicinity of habitations.

* * *

776 In summary we would say that the spirits of good are rep-
775 resented by Mareiwa and by a series of other protector spirits,
especially those of shamans, which are no other than those of
[554] dead curers. Their standing or status depends on that which they
had in life, the greater their prestige as curers in this world, [149] the more important will be their position in the next as benevolent spirits. The spirits of evil are represented by dead persons and are of different degrees of danger according to the characteristics of their death. It is presumable that those called yorujá, resembling the devil, the greatest incarnation of evil as an abstract idea, are spirits of the dead of a greater degree of wickedness, while the wanurú, connected almost exclusively with sickness, are spirits of dead persons of a lesser degree of evil.

Finally, the differences between the two categories of spirits — benevolent and malevolent — are of two classes: 1) of a quantitive character, according to their power to do good or evil respectively; 2) of a formal character, referring to the apparition of evil spirits in various bodily forms, and the absence of such forms for good spirits. [151] [Page 150 is blank.]

[151] Conclusions

177 Magic shows itself to be one of the strongest institutions
771 of Guajiro culture despite the fact that, as we have shown
throughout this study, it is gradually losing its importance in
789 proportion to the lowering of the shaman's prestige as the spiritual leader of the group. This is due to the already mentioned factors of proseletyzing and acculturation on a rising scale, brought about by the influence of a continually increasing number of civilizado elements in the peninsula, as well as by the consequences of the acculturation experienced by the members of the society. However, it is magic that still dominates many of the aspects of the native's daily life, not to say the greater part, and it is this that we are trying to synthesize and briefly explain in this chapter.

132 1. Economy. The Guajiro's life, as we saw in the Intro-
182 duction is strictly dependent on the tyrannically dominating cli-
771 mate, given the conditions of the peninsula where this community lives, relying as they do on the seasonal fluctuations of rains
789 to which they have adapted their system of agriculture and stock grazing, essential sources of their economy. As the people's livelihood directly depends on these, the Guajiro, lacking the higher techniques of irrigation and water conservation, puts his hope of survival in methods of magic, whether they be personal, collective, or directly exercised by the curer-magician of the community. These are no other than the exorcisms carried out by the latter to attract the rains in the long summers by invoking his protector spirits and especially Mareiwa, the personification of good and of rain; or the adoration and ceremonies in honor of the iguana carried out by private individuals with the same end in view; or, in short, all the methods of magic we have enumerated in connection with the natural phenomenon of rain.

Also in respect to the economy we must remember the
[241 presence of women when the sowing of crops is done, which
462] establishes a division of work by sex based on the magic association of the transmission of feminine fecundity to the seeds.

177 [152] Moreover, faced with the new phenomenon of stock
2[illegible] grazing, the native has adapted his magic methods to this, im-
789 posing the same or similar treatments used for the members of the

[152 cont.]

177 233 789 community, especially in cases of illness and pestilences, as can be seen in the section "Shamanistic treatment of animals" in Chapter II. If, on one hand, stock grazing partly changed some of the social system related to magic, on the other hand, at the same time it has also felt the influence of this institution to the point of acquiring its own characteristics which differentiate it from other systems of stock grazing, which follow, in general, the lines laid down by the Spanish colonists. Magic is sui generis and plays its part today, as the oldest institution can, in Guajiro culture.

789 Moreover, not only in the collective sense but in the individual, the action of magic on the economy shows itself very clearly in the charm [contra] to make oneself rich, which we have described in detail in Chapter VI and which, as is logical within the Guajiro social dynamic, is connected to such important social matters as status, as we shall see later.

In the chapter which we have called "Magic as the Origin of the Theater in La Guajira," we may also see the effectiveness [776] of magic in the private economy, since the owner of a piece of cultivated land is the one who organizes at his own expense the dance and fiesta given to attract the blessing of the good spirits, of Mareiwa on the crops, which require sufficient rain and certain climatic conditions to ripen. So great is their confidence that they believe that the more solemn the ceremony of the Dance of the Kid, the more benefit will be received from the spirits they invoke and fete, and the greater the probability of success for the harvest.

182 619 789 2. Society. Guajiro society, as we have said, has transferred a great part of the responsibility for its survival and stability to magic and has a tranquil confidence in it, convinced of its effectiveness and holding firmly to an institutional determinism which only now is beginning to break down fundamentally. The cultural institution of magic represents to the individual Guajiro a system of life, thought, and belief which unites him to his group as much as does the consanguineous tie and the established clan system. Magic is the general and generalized institution, essentially independent of the characteristic social divisions

[152 cont.]
182 brought about by the family and clan organization; it embraces
789 all the community without distinction and influences and de-
[619] termines it in many of its aspects. [153]

For this reason magic is bound up closely with their regimen for personal security and collective stability in three ways: 1) because it establishes a series of preventative norms aimed at defending the individual and the community from possible evils provoked by the concurrence of natural or supernatural, physical or psychic phenomena; 2) because it possesses adequate methods of treating the evils, which the individuals of the community, by transgressing the cultural patterns, bring upon themselves, thus affecting them in their persons or interests; 3) because it instills the belief in the community that any infraction of the established norms can provoke abnormal happenings which work against their stability.

182 We would say, then, that in the first place the shaman
*756 with his methods of magic is an institution created to maintain,
defend, and even restore the regimen of stability to the community and its members as will be seen by the short enumeration of the following facts.

a) Medication for illness to restore the health of the patients.

b) Propitiation of the rains, indispensable for agriculture, the growth and conservation of pastures (the essential factor for stock grazing), and the maintenance of fresh water in the wells and water holes, as much for the use of the members of the community as for the sustenance of the stock.

c) Warding off pestilences and epidemics, both in humans and in animals; directed first to the saving of life among the individuals of the community and second to the defense of their interests represented by the stock — the support of their economy and of their existence.

d) Prevention of the effects of dreams, which within Guajiro mental mechanics correspond to actual realities as revelations of the future, anticipatory announcements of things that are going to happen within the community and which will affect one or
[782] more persons in their social group. This is one of the origins, as
we have seen, for the animal sacrifices which have so much importance in the daily lives of these Indians.

[153 cont.]

182 e) Defense of the community and the individual from the
*756 harmful influence of evil spirits, an influence which largely expresses itself in personal and communal illnesses.

In exchange for all these services given by the shaman,
554 the community offers him as payment, on one hand, their back-
*756 ing, respect, admiration, and even fear, and on the other hand, material goods which consolidate his status of privilege, such as necklaces, cloth, jewels in general, animals, and money.

• • •

182 [154] In accordance with the previously established
791 division between magic and the foretelling of the future in Chapter IV, we should now state that the diviner, like the shaman, serves to maintain, defend, and restore the regimen for individual security and collective stability, an affirmation which we have based on the following functions which he performs:

a) Discovery through divination of the causes of illnesses, thus permitting the prescribing of adequate medication, with great probability of success for the patient, who is generally a child.

b) Also through divination the restoration of lost objects
[685] and the discovery of the thief — factor in the breaking of the regimen for personal security — so that the thief may suffer the penalties with which society punishes those who violate the cultural norms concerning personal property.

[787] c) Divination by which, when husbands are absent from home, their state of health can be ascertained and their wives can provide them with rapid and effective help.

d) Determination, in the last instance, of a novice's "vocation" or lack of "vocation" in the science of shamanism, a decision which is of great importance for the community in general, since on it depends whether the community has in its future magician a defender of its regimen for stability, a counselor and spiritual director, or, on the contrary, a charlatan on whom the protector spirits have not descended to illuminate him and who

182 [154 cont.]
791 is for this reason most probably a moral and material fraud.

We have to remember that there are two fundamental facts
*756 with respect to divination: 1) that the shaman can be both
787 things, magician and diviner, which increases his position and prestige; and 2) that any individual can learn for his personal use and the good of others the methods of divination, which do not require, as they do in the case of the shaman, the illumination and constant presence of the protector spirits who exercise their domination over the individual in whom they dwell and whom they submit entirely to their will.

* * *

182 Ordinary magic, that is, that which does not depend on
626 the shaman or the diviner, but is rooted in popular belief and
is like a code of preventative norms tending to avoid the break-
789 ing of institutionalized cultural patterns, is also a true regimen for [155] stability. It clearly indicates that if this or that norm is violated, the individual will suffer the punishment in himself, in his offspring, or in his family group, such as, for example: a) nonattendance at burials, not assisting in the digging of graves, not looking on the lowering of bodies into the grave, etc., on the part of both parents when the woman is pregnant.

b) The prohibition against approaching children or sick people after having touched a corpse.

c) The precautions that a pregnant woman should take on meeting a snake.

d) The ceremony that should be practiced with the corpse of a first-born child.

e) The restriction imposed on a pregnant woman's husband regarding hunting with modern firearms.

f) Finally, the observation of all those norms whose violation may adversely affect the actual birth or the health of the newborn baby by causing the mother to be upset and ill before or during childbirth.

g) We may also see this action of magic in the use of different kinds of charms (fetishes, amulets, talismans), in the express prohibition of not pronouncing the personal name of an

[155 cont.]
182 individual or of the dead, in the aspect which we have called
626 "Omens and Augural Birds," in the behavior followed by individ-
789 uals who wish to call up a breeze during a windless calm at sea or to send away eclipses and lightning which, according to their belief, are malevolent.

* * *

789 A very interesting aspect of magic is its use for and against
595 some of the cultural institutions and their institutionalized patterns; for example, the use of love charms and the compliance with certain norms after the period of seclusion accompanying the ceremonies at the time of a young woman's initiation. Her aim is to fight against polygamy, with a view either to obtaining predominance over other wives or, better, to prevent the man who has acquired her for his wife from acquiring more women with whom she would have to share his life. Possibly due to the influ-
[177] ence of acculturation, there is a tendency toward monogamy on the part of the women. The men, however, tend toward polygamy
[654] for prestige, since for it they must have a good economical position, as the price of women is high, increasingly so the greater their social position.

751 [156] Another institution that we see directly affected by
771 magic is this same initiation of young women. We saw how
881 the death of a first-born child required a series of ceremonies to prevent future children dying at birth, one after the other, and we stated that one of the principal ceremonies consisted in the observance of certain norms which bring to mind very clearly
[561] the initiation of the young mother. Their idea would seem to be that one of the causes of the death of the first-born was the deficient carrying out of the magic-biological-social ceremonial to which the girl must submit to prepare for her life as an adult.

764 Also the norms relating to the dead and the belief in a
775 life beyond the grave rest almost exclusively on magic, and
771 through it their prestige and their functioning are kept up. Magic
626 is also the cause of the fear and respect which relatives and friends show to their dead, and it is magic which also promotes all the ceremonial rites that are celebrated in this connection.

[156 cont.]

554 556 789 3. The individual. Another interesting social aspect related to magic is in connection with the status derived from wealth, expressed by the greater or lesser number of heads of stock owned by an individual. But apart from this strictly material aspect, magic has powers which when put into action assist the individual to acquire a coveted position or to improve one he already has, as is done, for example, in the cultural aspect of language, the mastery of which with the use of fine turns of speech can give to the speaker the highly esteemed and prestigeful position of arbitrator, or intermediary, in their interclan struggles, a position that is often confused with that of chief.

Within this field of magic activity we can cite as examples the following:

a) The sacrifice of animals, which not only gives prestige to the living but also establishes the status of the deceased in his life beyond the tomb.

b) The use of diverse charms such as those for love, for making one rich, for obtaining respect, prestige, and affection, etc.

c) The custom of an individual eating the leavings of food of individuals of special physical characteristics, especially those having qualities superior to his own, as for example, a white skin, a beard, etc., with the end of becoming more outstanding and improving his status.

d) As an indirect form of elevating status, we have the case of the Indian Kurira-Pâta, who swallowed a charm and took a slave girl for wife in order to heal the wounds he received from the Kusina Indians. [157] The slave, because of a dream, passed to the category of wife, thus ascending the social scale.

• • •

181 771 789 A great part of the Guajiro's personality is molded by this institution of his culture, and many of his reactions would be inexplicable without previous knowledge of the process of magic, the fields of its functioning, the ways of life it has created, the

[157 cont.]

181 mental outlook it originates — imbued, as we have affirmed, 771 with an animistic determinism — and the beliefs it implies in the different angles of Guajiro human activity, as it will have 789 been possible to observe throughout the length of the work we are presenting. So much is this so that the very basic impulses of the individual are seen in many circumstances to be influenced by magic.

a) To prove this in the sexual aspect it suffices for us to 834 cite again some facts already described and explained in previous chapters, such as the taboos imposed on the shamans, especially when they are women and according to which they should cohabit exclusively with their husbands, avoid caresses, motions, prolonged coitus, and pregnancy, and never exercise their functions during their menstrual periods. Besides this, it can be seen in the lifting of sexual taboos, or better said, the permitted violation of the norms which rule the community in this respect during the celebration of the Fiesta of the Kid, which reaches the point of allowing the consummation of the carnal act among the unmarried, an act absolutely prohibited in their society in normal times and which would provoke — as fully explained in the corresponding section — compensation payment and even interclan war with its tremendous consequences of persecution, annihilation, and slavery. It can also be observed in what we called the "proof of virginity," which permits a male to caress the bodies of young women who take part in the fiesta, an action prohibited, as in the previous case, in normal times. [832] Among the charms we also found some that act in this way, and also significant is the act of rubbing bixa ointment on the genital organs and breasts to make them more effective in love-making.

b) In the matter of food we saw proofs of the influence 262 of magic, especially related to the life of the shaman, particularly when he is in one of his "illumination" trances or in a curing ceremony. This influence also shows itself in the shaman's initiation, in the initiation of [158] young women, in the magic contamination of food by some animals which can cause sickness in newborn children, and in the prohibition against eating the flesh of the hawk which produces sterility in young and old of both sexes. Also, it is found in relatives being forbidden to eat the

[158 cont.]

262 meat of animals sacrificed during the wake of a deceased member
of the family. The murderer's self-denial of all solid food in
his daily diet is another proof of the intervention of magic in the
aspect of the Guajiro's nourishment. The ceremonies of propitia-
[789] tion for rain and the ripening of the harvests are other palpable
demonstrations of the intervention of magic in this way.

c) And, finally, in relation to aggression, we see the very
754 marked influence of magic, particularly in the charms which are
789 used to cause injury to certain people: for example, those made
of a young woman's hair, the blood of a hummingbird, the tail
of a dog, and *achiote* to make a girl fall in love with a man who
later intends to betray her; or the one used by women who,
having bought a talisman from a woman expert in those matters,
place it in the clothes of a man whom they wish to harm after
acquiring an old sandal of his and burning it, so as to cause him
182 bodily and mental injury. Furthermore, magic forewarns and
787 allows an individual to foresee the acts of aggression of which
789 he or a clan or a family group is going to be the victim by the
interpretation of the shaman's dream or that of a private person,
as was seen in the section "Magic and dreams" in Chapter VIII.
The effect of magic on the regimen for individual security and
collective stability tends to be that of saving the person or the
group, as the case may be, from acts of aggression on the part
of potential enemies, such acts being foreseen through magic
means properly interpreted.

Names of Plants and Animals

Plants:
104 *achiote* (*Bixa orellana*)
192 *ahuyama* [squash] (*Cucurbita máxima*)
824 artemisia (f. *Synantherae* or *Compositae*)
indigo (f. *Leguminosae*)
cardon (*Pilocereus atroviridis*)
mahogany cedar (fam. *Cedrilaceae*, Sp. *Mahogoni* of Linnaeus)
lupine (*Abrus precatorius*) [Indian licorice]

[158 cont.]

104 divi-divi (Libidibia coriaria. Jacq.) [159]
192 frailejon (Espeletia spp.)
824 guamacho (Pereskia colombiana. Webb).
guayacan (f. Zigophyllaceae) [In Venezuela, Tabebuia guayacan (family Bignoniaceae)]
plantain (f. Plantaginaceae, sp. Ureus)
oxtongue (Polygonaceae, g. Rumex)
mamoncillo (f. Sapindaceae, sp. Bijuga)
mangrove tree (f. Rhizophoraceae)
oxeye (f. Papilionaceae)
nettle (f. Urticaceae)
watermelon (Cucurbita vulgaris)
quina dulce [sweet quina] (Cinchona spp.)
sage (fam. Labiataceae) [Labiatae?]
elder or alder tree (f. Caprifoliaceae)
purslane (f. Portulacaceae, g. Portulaca)
vira-vira (f. Compositae, g. Gnaphalium)
yucca, cassava (Manihot utilissima)

Animals:
104 bee (order Hymenoptera)
192 bittern (belonopterus cayennensis)
825 wasp (order Hymenopt)
owl (Bubo virginianus elatus)
cauquero (sp. of deer)
colibri (fam. Trochuilidae)
rabbit (sylvilagus apollinaris)
rattlesnake (Crotalus terrificus)
hunting snake [culabra cazadera] (Clelia clelia)
buzzard (Coragyps atratus foetens)
cattle tick (g. Boophilus)
sparrow hawk (harpagus bidentatus)
iguana (order of the saurians)
owl (Tyto alba sabandeana)
machorro, sp. of lizard (order of the saurians)
bat (Carollia perspiciliata)

[159 cont.]

104 woodpecker (Ceophloeus lineatus)
192 domestic duck (Anas platyrhynchos)
825 partridge (Perdix rubra)
ray (Rajas batis) [160]
jaguar (félis onça)
troupial (f. Icteridae)
peccary (Pecari)
fox (Canis azaroe)
curí (Cavia anolaimae)
mountain cat (margay tigrina)
deer (Cervus elaphus)

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[For information about shamans see category 116, pp. 9-23, 24-47, 54, 58-62, 77-78, 81, 84-85, 119, 127-128, 172]